

Final Project Evaluation



Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security Project

September 2020



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List of Acronyms

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DoA	Department of Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HYV	High Yielding Varieties
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDP	National Development Plan
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
RLSFS	Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security

Executive Summary

Context: The overarching goal of this final evaluation of the project “Strengthening the resilience of the conflict affected resident and returnee populations in newly accessible areas of Telafar and Sinjar Districts, Ninewa governorate of Iraq, through improving food security, livelihoods and solidarity” was to document the important lessons which could guide the formulation and implementation of future projects that may use similar approaches. An underlying purpose was to provide strategic and programmatic recommendations for future programmatic cycle for Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Iraq country office and ASB Head Office as well as disseminating information to other relevant stakeholders who could benefit from it.

The project’s goal was to improve the food security, livelihoods opportunities and solidarity in the target area of Telafar district, hence strengthening the resilience of the local population. The project’s overall outcomes were “to increase access to nutritious food and livelihood by restoring irrigated agricultural production, strengthen local economy by providing income generating opportunities and necessary skills and capacities and support residents and returnee farmers in promoting peaceful coexistence and strengthening the social cohesion.

Objective of evaluation: The objective of this evaluation was to assess this project in terms of achievements of its goal and its impact on beneficiaries. The evaluation followed the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Furthermore, it aimed to identify best practises and lessons learned for future strategic programming.

Evaluation methods: The evaluation was primarily carried out by ASB Iraq’s M&E Manager (from here on, the evaluator), who gathered necessary information through the desk review of relevant reports, field visits and national level consultation meetings with partners, field based and national level in-person interviews. Harikar’s MEAL coordinator and Project Manager supported the evaluator, by facilitating and arranging the interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative data gathered as part of the assessment as well combination of secondary research, the evaluator analysed the data implying a descriptive and interpretive approach and then prepared this evaluation report. In addition to DAC criteria the evaluation, focused on other issues such as project implementation, management and relationship with the implementing partner.

Overall recommendations: ASB’s project is found to be relevant, realistic, and successful towards improving food security, livelihoods and solidarity among the conflict affected residents and new returnees of North Ninawa-Telafar district.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of ASB

ASB has been working in Iraq since 2012 initially to respond to the Syrian Crisis in Duhok governorate by providing medical care to the refugees in Domiz camp. The country office was opened in Duhok, in 2014. Since then ASB Iraq has implemented projects in the sectors of health, WASH, protection and livelihood for IDPs, refugees and host communities, valued at € 13 million. In 2016, ASB increased the portfolio of its programs and expanded its presence to all governorates of Iraq, opening one office in Baghdad and one in Anbar to satisfy the immediate needs of thousands of beneficiaries while responding to the developmental plan of the country.

1.2 Project Context

The largest number of people affected by the conflict in 2014 due to emergence of so-called Islamic State (IS), were from the Ninewa Governorate of Iraq. Significant proportions of the population of the districts of Sinjar and Telafar were displaced. These districts are historically regarded as some of the most fertile areas of Iraq with the potential for significant agricultural production. However, following the intense fighting and looting, many villages sustained severe damage and the returning farmers were not capable to rebuild and restore their farms and therefore reestablish their main source of income. With the ongoing financial crisis neither the central government nor the local authorities can assist the population with basic inputs and resources or to move towards resilience and development or rebuild the damaged infrastructure in the area. Furthermore, the population structure of these districts is a unique and diverse mixture of tribes, religions, and ethnicities that was severely impaired by the IS take-over. Tensions have eased; however, the fragile political and security situation are contributing to the under development of the area and preventing further returns.

The overarching **objective of this project was therefore to strengthen the sustainable resilience, social stability, and cohesion of the population in these conflict-affected communities and to create adequate and appropriate living conditions through the support of agricultural production.**

The project interventions were consequently focused on the three main outcomes:

1. Food Security - With irrigated agricultural production restored and increased in selected communities of Sinjar and Telafar districts, access to nutritious food is improved and livelihood can be independently secured.
2. Income generation - Resident and returnee farmers living in Sinjar and Telafar districts are provided with skills and capacities to sustainable income generation through increase of on farm income and thus local economy strengthened.

3. Social Cohesion - Resident and returnee villagers and communities supported to promote peaceful coexistence and strengthen social cohesion to ensure that all have equal access to irrigated agricultural production inputs and outputs.

Under the first outcome of food security, agricultural inputs (greenhouses, irrigation equipment, agricultural tools) were to be provided combined with agricultural trainings in 20 selected villages. Repairing Al Jazeera Irrigation Project would increase size of irrigated land and lead to improved food security. The second outcome of income generation included restoring two market centres and training farmers in financial management and marketing concepts that would lead to improved skills and capacities to increased income generation. Lastly, the third outcome of social cohesion envisioned conflict resolution trainings and interethnic and inter-religious agricultural cross visits that would lead to improved social cohesion in the target communities.

The main implementing partner for this project was Harikar NGO - a non-governmental, non-profit humanitarian organization that was established in 2004 dedicated to promoting the Human Rights and in particular the rights of Children & Women. ASB started cooperating with Harikar from 2014, as part of winterization, distribution, and hygiene promotion campaigns in Berseve 1 and 2 IDP camps. In partnership with different UN and international agencies, Harikar has successfully implemented 150 projects, targeting a diverse and significant number of marginalized, poor and needy local community members, refugees, IDPs and most vulnerable groups. Harikar's strong experience of working with communities and ASB's previous working experience with them ensured strong communication and coordination for the project.

1.3 Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation was focused on providing a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and outcomes of the Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security (RLSFS) project in the Telafar district of Iraq since its inception in September 2017 until its completion in August 2020. The evaluation analysed the progress made against the intended results and final goal of the project, in addition to identifying areas to continue, improve, and design new similar project. The results of the evaluation are also intended to help to design country specific projects/projects in Iraq and identify the need for any further technical assistance to support the strengthening of resilience. Furthermore, the evaluation will also help to understand the relative merits of different implementation options and thematic approaches.

1.4 Methodology

This evaluation adhered to ASB's Norms and Standards through a methodological Framework of Analysis, designed by the evaluator in cooperation with ASB Project Manager, focusing on meeting the evaluation objectives. It followed an interactive and transparent approach in the

process of consultations with all internal and external stakeholders. In a broader picture, this evaluation has assessed the OECD/DAC (the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee) criteria i.e. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability aspects of the project. Likewise, the evaluator has applied the results-based management approach together with the “most significant change” method in assessing the project’s overall achievements at the levels of outcome and impact.

1.4.1 Data Collection

To collect relevant data and information, this evaluation combined both strategic desk study and qualitative and quantitative field research methods. The evaluator obtained the relevant data through the desk review of relevant project documents, assessments and reports, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with local, national, and regional level partners, stakeholders, and ASB and Harikar staff in Iraq. Due to restricted access between different governorates and the areas between KRI and Iraq (due to Covid-19), the evaluator could unfortunately not conduct any field visits for direct observation, to overcome this issue, skype meeting with the beneficiaries were arranged and asking Harikar team in Telafar to provide updated photos.

Moreover, seven enumerators (3 female and 4 male) were recruited from the target area for a period of one week, based on their previous experience on similar assignments, communication skills and willingness. The evaluator facilitated a one-day virtual training session covering topics such as humanitarian principles, communication skills, interviews and data collection, introduction to the project and purpose of the evaluation as well as practical usage of the digital data collector application Kobo Toolbox and role-plays. Two of the senior enumerators possessed extensive experience working in MEAL departments of international NGOs and had participated in several such evaluations and were therefore chosen to lead the Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Using the independent enumerators also ensured reliable results and provided the beneficiaries an opportunity to share any feedback without constraints.

At the local level, the enumerators convened in-depth interviews with project beneficiaries, local staff, local government officials, political and civil society leaders, following the guidelines and questionnaires designed by the evaluator and in line with evaluation objectives and meeting the evaluation criteria specified (Annex 1). At the national level, additional enumerator based in Duhok, conducted interviews with project partner Harikar, relevant project staffs, and other individuals who were familiar with ASB’s project interventions. Selection of geographical locations and selection of respondents for FGDs and in-depth interview was based on maintaining the gender, ethnic, religious, and geographical diversity. This was also intended to receive varied responses to obtain the real picture of the project.

A total of 4 FGDs were conducted as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues, especially related to social cohesion and conflict resolution. 14 in depth KIIs were carried out with community leaders, political and civil society leaders as well as governmental representatives (Annex 3). Furthermore, 283 interviews were done with the direct beneficiaries of the project to have extensive feedback on the outcome and impact of the project activities and people's opinion. The enumerators also observed the livelihood schemes in the field as well as using participant observation tool during the interviews and FGD to measure participants' degree of satisfaction on the project. To ensure adequate coverage for an impact evaluation of the projects, 25 different villages were covered during project evaluation period.

Likewise, semi structured interviews took place with ASB Livelihoods Program Manager and Country Representative as well with Harikar's Country Director, Programme Manager and Project Manager.

The sample of respondents was drawn based on gender, religious, and ethnicity, cultural and geographical diversity within the selected project locations. The sample was selected in consultation with ASB and Harikar project staff, to identify adequate diversity of respondents across the project area. Purposive nonprobability sampling was used for identifying the key informants and participants of focus groups to include individuals with good knowledge and understanding of the project that would be able to provide relevant and diverse set of opinions and beliefs. However, for the 283 direct beneficiary interviews – stratified random sampling (probability) was deployed as the beneficiaries were first divided into groups based on the assistance they received and further divided by location, gender, and ethnicity.

1.4.2 Data Analysis and Report Preparation

Information gathered through this evaluation study has been analysed through a comparative content analysis as well as interpretative approach. This information has been utilised to draw appropriate conclusions, strategies and evidence-based recommendations based on Framework of Analysis and meeting the evaluation criteria specified by ASB.

As the first two stages of preparation and desk review and field work/ data collection had been completed, the following step was data processing and analysis. The data was triangulated and analysed using largely qualitative data analysis techniques. The qualitative data was entered into data entry formats, coded for common themes, triangulated, and finally analysed to summarise the findings. The quantitative data from the beneficiary interviews was translated to English, standardized, validated for accuracy, and cleaned in a database. These findings were then used in formulating the conclusion and recommendations. To ensure that no important information is missed from the field, Daily Interpretive Analysis of each interview (either fully or partially) was prepared.

The preliminary draft was then presented to ASB leadership, which was then reviewed and returned to the evaluator. The consolidated comments and recommendations received have been addressed to the extent possible in this final report.

1.5. Limitations

This evaluation also has a few limitations. Some key limitations are presented below.

- Outbreak of global health pandemic of Covid-19 prevented the evaluator from travelling to the project area for interviews and observation as well as for training and supervision of enumerators.
- Some beneficiaries and key informants were not interviewed or could not participate in Focus Group Discussions due to movement restrictions in the target area.

2. Key Findings

Key findings of this evaluation are clustered under relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability and presented separately under the four thematic areas of intervention of ASB.

2.1 Relevance

Project alignment with the humanitarian response priorities, Iraq strategic development plans and ASB and BMZ strategy

According to the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq¹, 11 million of Iraqis were estimated to need humanitarian assistance, which is almost one third of the total Iraqi population of 36 million and the highest figure of the previous seven years. The current, 2020 HRP Plan² estimates this figure to be considerably lower at 4.10 million people. This project was designed and planned in accordance with the 2017 HRP for Iraq, taking into consideration the second strategic objective - to facilitate and advocate for voluntary, safe, and dignified returns and the fourth objective - give options to families to live in Iraq in dignity by expanding resilience and social cohesion programs in hard-hit, unstable communities. Over 3 million Iraqis were displaced in 2017, making the humanitarian crisis in Iraq one of the largest and most volatile in the world, - 3.2 million people were estimated food insecure, forced to rely on severe and often irreversible coping strategies and social tensions were expected to impact at least 5.2 million people with Ninewa governorate being at the epicenter of the crisis.

¹ 2017 Iraq Humanitarian Response plan,
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/2017_hrp_irq_final_3.pdf

² 2020 Iraq Humanitarian response Plan
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iraq_hrp_2020.pdf

The food security objectives of HRP highlighted by the cluster included facilitating access to food and help to restore the agricultural assets of highly vulnerable families in priority locations, distributing essential agricultural inputs and providing technical assistance to highly vulnerable families in priority locations.

The livelihood objectives of HRP suggested replacing lost assets and generating urgent cash income for highly vulnerable families in priority locations with large concentrations of displaced families. Some specific recommendations that were incorporated in ASB's project included providing training on financial literacy and management to destitute households and providing cash grants and technical support to help vulnerable households establish micro and small businesses and facilitating access to credit for community start-ups. As such, **the project was entirely aligned with the humanitarian response priorities, both at strategic level as well as in line with the specific food security and livelihood sub-objectives and recommendations.**

The project was planned in accordance with the 2013-2017 National Development Strategy for Iraq³ that highlighted weak agricultural productivity due to weak use of agricultural machinery and fertilizers, improved seeds, and ways of fighting agricultural pests during the production process, aside from weak skills among cultivators and the inability of most of them to utilize modern technology in the cultivation and keep pace with technological developments and adopt improved new strains. **This project therefore aimed to increase the size of irrigated agricultural lands, agricultural production, and the technical capacity of the farmers in implementing improved methods in irrigated agriculture, crop diversification and conservative agriculture.**

The poverty rate in Iraq rose from 19% in 2012, to 23% in 2014, in governorates under ISIS control, especially in rural areas, it even reached 40%. The 2020 National Development Plan considers poverty reduction to be a fundamental theme and objective and the 2018 Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty⁴ recommends activities that focus on increasing labor productivity, creating job opportunities and earning sustainable income by men and women. This project contributed to the reduction of poverty in the fields of food security, reduction of malnutrition and economic stabilization with increased income generating opportunities and rehabilitation of irrigated agriculture. **By supporting the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their areas of origins, it also complied with the strategic objectives of the central government in Baghdad and Kurdish Regional government.**

One of ASB's guiding principles is to provide help – as fast as possible, as long as necessary. This is done through an integrated approach - immediate relief is provided in the event of

³ National Development Strategy Iraq 2013-2017

https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_national_development_plan_2013-2017.pdf

⁴ Strategy for the reduction of poverty in Iraq 2018-2022

https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_prs_summary_en_2018.pdf

sudden crisis or disasters, but not only emergency relief – communities are helped with reconstruction work, implementation of long-term measures to fight the causes of poverty and how build resilience for future emergency situations. Therefore, the project corresponded with ASB's mission in supporting return and reintegration and strengthening the communities with sustainable interventions and with special focus on ASB Iraq's country strategy. The project is also aligned with German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) strategy for Iraq specifically focusing on income generating measures, preparing for the reintegration of internally displaced persons and rebuilding and stabilizing areas liberated from the IS (Islamic State)⁵

Contextual Relevance of the Project

Agriculture used to be the second biggest industry in Iraq (after oil and gas), however since 2003, economic mismanagement within the Agriculture and Interior Ministries contributed to rising poverty and food insecurity among rural populations⁶. The conflict with ISIS in 2014 further harmed the agricultural sector as thousands were forcibly displaced and on returning were faced with destroyed or demolished houses, damaged or non-existent infrastructure and looted agricultural equipment and machinery. As agricultural is the main source of livelihoods in rural communities, the returning farmers were often denied the only opportunity to provide for their families, especially as they were not financially able to repair the farms and replace the missing equipment and tools. The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis jointly conducted by World Food Program and Iraqi Government in 2016 emphasized that more than half of Iraqi families at risk of food insecurity.⁷

As the DoA (Department of Agriculture) of Ninewa is the body ultimately responsible for the agricultural activities of the governorate, they were closely involved in all stages of the project and emphasis was put on building their capacities and ensuring they are involved as this will guarantee ownership and the sustainability of the activities as well as offer the opportunity to learn from this project to replicate similar innovations throughout Ninewa, but also in other governorates.

⁵ German Involvement in Iraq
https://www.bmz.de/en/countries_regions/naheer_osten_mittelmeer/iraq/index.html

⁶ Iraqi Agriculture in Crisis <https://enablingpeace.org/agriculture-crisis/>

⁷ The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023781/download/?_ga=2.62504684.1971044952.1600597233-1833456109.1600597233

“The key priorities for the Department of Agriculture have not changed in the last years, the focus is still on improving agricultural production (both vegetables and wheat) and developing the livestock sector.”

Maher Ali, Manager of Agricultural Department Zummar

Mr. Ali also added that even though this project was very relevant to the agricultural needs and gaps in Zummar, especially in providing agricultural inputs and delivering specialized trainings, the challenges still remain, and the agricultural sector will only develop if enough support is provided by government as well as international organizations. **95% of the questioned farmers confirmed that the agricultural support provided by the project was either relevant or highly relevant** (only one farmer marked the project to be irrelevant, with remaining 5% rating it as somewhat relevant), however the agricultural sector needs further funding and support, predominantly from the Iraqi government.

In addition to the focus on irrigation and increasing the farmers’ agricultural production and size of irrigated land, the farmers were trained on marketing and finances as part of the agricultural training package. The trainings that were aligned with the strategic livelihoods’ objectives of the 2017 HRP Plan, received extremely positive overall feedback and were ranked highly relevant, by all the participating farmers as well as DoA. Mr. Ubaid, a previous director of DoA of Zummar, who was also involved in the curriculum planning, mentioned that these trainings were extremely important for the farmers and approved the additional subjects of financial and marketing management in addition to agricultural topics. He added that despite the mounting need to educate farmers in new modern farming techniques and methods the DoA is currently still not capable of delivering such training sessions, therefore the in-depth trainings accompanied by high quality printed materials were particularly important and relevant.

Good and Replicable Practice

This project well understood and tailored its implementation approach taking into consideration the advice of DoA and the real gaps and needs of the farmers in target communities. In addition to providing the agricultural inputs it ensured that all participating farmers received appropriate and relevant training to ensure the maximum impact and future sustainability of the intervention.

All participating farmers were carefully selected using vulnerability criteria and in consultations with local community leaders and mukhtars ensuring the most vulnerable and neediest were reached from all ethnic and religious backgrounds. Special focus was put on

including a high percentage of women who were the head of their households, hence being at the most vulnerable position.

The agricultural outcomes were very closely linked with access to fully functional Al Jazeera Irrigation Project, extensive network of irrigation channels covering 600,000,000 sq. meters, fed from Tigris River and the Mosul Lake. The cumulative impact of international sanctions, sectarian tensions and continual conflicts and violence has resulted in significant damage to the channels with no proper maintenance or repair. This in turn has had a significant impact on the nearby communities relying on the water for their farming needs. The area surrounding Al Jazeera Irrigation Project is divided into three phases, with the first phase being closest to the source and having the highest population.

According to the local authorities, the current population residing in the three phases of Al Jazeera is 70,374 people within 58 villages and have cumulative land of 328,200,000 square meters. (Table 1).

Table 1. Population by individuals and households in the villages located around Al Jazeera Irrigation Project

	No of villages	No of people	No of HH	Square Meter
Phase I	23	27,969	5,200	130,100,000
Phase II	21	27,800	3,051	141,050,000
Phase III	14	14,605	2,065	57,050,000
	58	70,374	10,316	328,200,000
Beneficiaries	58		8251	270,150,000

Due to continuous high security situation as well delays with FAO's restoration work in the first phase of Al Jazeera Irrigation Project as part of their two-year restoration of Agriculture and Irrigation Water Systems Sub-program and field channels related to this part of the project were delayed. The preliminary works in the second phase, therefore only started in November 2019, when a contracted construction company casted concrete around the transformers and repaired the damaged rock surfacing. The rehabilitation of field channels started in February through a second company and was scheduled to be completed in May 2020, however due to Covid-19 related access restrictions it was delayed, continuing until late August.

The sample of farmers selected to participate in the final evaluation was all from the first Phase I, as some of the villages in Phase III have not received access to water in the date of evaluation due to the DOWR work in the secondary station. Due to the delays with activities restoring and repairing Al Jazeera Irrigation Project's irrigation channels, the famers in the three phases were not included for direct assistance in specialized trainings. However, the

overall feedback and comments from these farmers regarding Al Jazeera Irrigation were very positive and acclaimed the project activities to be highly relevant to the community's needs.

“Agriculture is my family’s only income and it’s very difficult to grow anything without a reliable water source. I used to rely on rainwater and was not always able to grow vegetables, but with Al Jazeera project operational again, I have planted a lot of vegetables for my family and will hopefully manage to sell the surplus in the local market!”

57-year-old returnee farmer.

Abdul Majed Ahmed, **the Director of the Water directorate in Mosul praised the project as being aligned with their vision and strategy and restoring the source of livelihoods for the farmers again.** He was also appreciative of the strong coordination between the DoW and the project partners and felt that all their feedback and comments were taken into consideration. The DoW engineer responsible for the project, Jassim Al-Zikr, also added that the intervention was highly relevant and as a result more farmers will be able to return to the villages and restart their agricultural activities. The mukhtars⁸ from the villages who were engaged in a discussion during a FGD also highlighted the significant damage that was caused by the disrupted irrigation system and assured that the project activities indeed address a major problem and disruption of livelihoods.

Under the second outcome of Income Generation – Added value chain for marketing agricultural products, farmers were supported and encouraged to sell their surplus agricultural products to secure and increase their farm’s income, two regional market centers were rehabilitated. Rapid market analysis took place to identify the most suitable market centers in November 2018 with Ayadiya (12km from Tel Afar and 65km from Mosul) being chosen as the first location with pre-conflict population of 3900 individuals.

Needs analysis was promptly carried out to ensure the market was restored in the most appropriate way, identifying the most suitable beneficiaries and the most relevant and appropriate type of small businesses needed for this community. 64 various small businesses (vegetable and agricultural products, grocery shops, butchers, mobile accessories, home appliances and pharmacies) were supported with restoration in December 2018. Following the first renovations of the 64 businesses, (Danish Red Cross) DRC continued renovating the remaining shops within the next six months and 10 additional businesses were opened with personal funds, making the place into a dynamic and popular market place that continues to grow to 110 markets.

⁸ Mukhtar = leader from the village elderly

As the market is supervised by the municipality, a FGD was conducted with the mayor, his assistant, and the personnel responsible for supervising the market. **Nashat Sadiq Mohammed, the mayor of Ayadiya estimated the intervention to be particularly relevant in contributing to restoration of commercial movement and strengthening the local economy.** 93% of the questioned shop owners agreed that the intervention had been relevant or very relevant to the community's needs, with 2 participants commenting it could have been more relevant.

The second market in Kohorta (35km from Zummar and 10km from Ayadiya) was chosen following a market assessment in December 2020 and similarly a needs assessment was conducted with the shopkeepers in March 2020 to identify the most necessary and relevant support needed. As the structures for the market were only built during August 2020 during the last month of the project, there was no sufficient time for conducting a PDM and the relevant questions were therefore included in the final evaluation. As the market was privately owned, the FGD included the owner of the market, market supervisor as well as leaders of surrounding villages Khermer and Kohorta. **Ahmed Al-Faris, the owner of the market land mentioned that the market was in eager need of support and the work done as part of this project was very relevant to their needs and he expects the sales to increase and attract more farmers to sell their products.** Nevertheless, he added that more support was needed to acquire permanent structures for the shopkeepers and make the marketplace more attractive for both shopkeepers and customers. The 16 questioned shopkeepers all similarly agreed that it had indeed been relevant, though added that it was too soon to estimate the complete impact of the activity.

The population structure in Telafar is a unique combination of a wide range of religious and ethnical groups and even before the IS offensive, the tensions had been building up causing mistrust and daily conflicts. The third outcome of social cohesion was therefore planned as a cross cutting topic, designed to directly impact the agricultural activities, and ensure farmers from various ethnical and religious backgrounds in the target area were included. All beneficiaries for the project activities were selected following the humanitarian principle of impartiality ensuring a wide diversity of backgrounds.

Following the Social Cohesion and Conflict Mitigation Conference in Barzan, the participating local leaders were supported in developing high level Activity Plans and replicating the training sessions within their own communities. The KII's with the selected leaders disclosed that the even though the situation has improved in the recent years, such training sessions and workshops are still highly relevant in the context of Telafar, where the elderly or more conservative families still have stereotypes and negative ideas of the "other". Additionally, one of the community members, who had participated in such training in Zummar, mentioned during the FGD that these trainings were indeed very relevant and beneficial for the people of Telafar, for the people to work together and trust one another again and address the

problems the region suffers from. **Therefore, it can be concluded that the project activities promoted social cohesion by building trust and the specialized training session on conflict mitigation further increased awareness on the issued and promoted peaceful solutions and co-existence.**

Key findings

- The project's goal and outcomes were strategically aligned with the humanitarian response priorities and plans, development strategies set by the Iraqi government and with ASB and BMZ strategic objective.
- The outcomes of the project directly addressed the main issues within the target region by strengthening the agricultural sector and local economy with social cohesion being an overlapping topic, hence estimated very relevant by all participants as well as local community leaders.
- In the absence of existing actors, the project appropriately catalyzed the first market renovation in Ayadiya that was later continued by other international and local actors, greatly strengthening the local economy.

2.2 Effectiveness

To evaluate the project's effectiveness, the following section will examine the project in terms of achieving the goal and outcomes as specified in the project design. Challenges encountered, facilitating and obstructing factors are also herein reviewed. The largest cross cutting challenge during the final months of the project was the Covid-19 related healthcare pandemic, which restricted access and movement causing delaying in some activities in training, rehabilitation of the market and renovation works at the Al Jazeera Irrigation Project.

Outcome 1: Food Security - With irrigated agricultural production restored and increased in selected communities of Sinjar and Telafar districts, access to nutritious food is improved and livelihood can be independently secured.

Target Indicators	Actual Achievement
50% of increase in area of land under irrigated agricultural production in the 40-targeted villages, compared to baseline 2016/7.	58% increase in area of land under irrigation in the target area.
1,120 farmers use the inputs and training to increase their agricultural production by 20% compared to 2016/7.	40% increase in agricultural production among the 1213 farmers who have received agricultural inputs.

The project work plan and design envisioned the 20-targeted villages to be located within the areas near Al Jazeera Irrigation Project and 20 villages not benefiting from Al Jazeera will be supported with drip irrigation systems in open fields, house gardens, green houses and agricultural inputs, and training. However as described in the relevance section, the number of villages and settlements benefiting for Al Jazeera channel is 58 villages, and since another INGO failed to fulfil its commitment to rehabilitate some field channels, the project covered all field channels connected to the 58 villages.

The first outcome envisages improved food security through improved agricultural practices and production and increased access to agricultural information and knowledge. Farmers from 33 villages received agricultural inputs (45 greenhouses, 99 open fields, 941 home gardens and 99 seasonal labourer farmers and 29 agribusiness farmers received different packages of agricultural tools, 1000 lit. water tanks, drip irrigation, equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds). Due to low equipment cost and dire need for agricultural support, the number of beneficiaries for receiving greenhouses and open field equipment both exceeded the targets, as 20 greenhouses and 40 open fields had been planned initially. The total number of farmers receiving inputs, 1213, was therefore higher than the planned figure of 1000, with 496 being women (43% of the participating farmers versus the planned 10%). The farmers received regular monitoring throughout the first year of receiving the inputs in addition to the in-depth training sessions with appropriate monitoring tools in place.

The PDM (among a sample of greenhouse and open field farmers) conducted in March 2020 reported the area of land under irrigation to have increased by 60% showing a 40% increase in agricultural production. As the 45 greenhouse and open field farmers were expected to hire on average two workers per farm and employ 120 workers during the lifespan of the project, the actual figure was even higher – 184, exceeding the set target once again. The figures regarding agricultural production were also collected during the same PDM with the questioned farmers reporting a 40% increase to their production.

“I received tools and equipment from ASB to establish a home garden and thank God, the first year I had a good harvest of vegetables – more than enough for my family. I sold the extra eggplants for a good price. I used the money I made to buy stationery and school uniform for my daughter, who was able to attend school after years of absence.”

Jamila, a widow and a head of household for a family of five.

The sample of farmers from Al Jazeera area was selected from the 23 villages in Phase I and during the end line report in August 2020 it was found that their irrigated land had increased from 38% (during immediate return in 2015/2016), to 93% in 2020, indicating a 55% increase in the size of irrigated land.

Agricultural trainings

Out of the 1213 beneficiaries 1,184 were involved in full course in agricultural training. The agricultural trainings were a vital component of the project to introduce farmers to modern farming techniques, introduce drip irrigation and climate resisting crops and enhance their capacities and ensure the permanent sustainability of the project. Only 5% of the farmers questioned during baseline had attended any agricultural training indicating very low levels of knowledge. 222 training courses were therefore conducted with 1184 farmers having participated in the needs based and gender sensitive courses. There were no consistent monitoring tools in place for the training sessions during the first project year, however the monitoring that took place during 2020 applied pre- and post-tests to measure the farmers' pre-existing knowledge and the increase due to the session. On average, the farmers could answer 44% of the questions correctly before having received the training (based on a sample of 709 trained farmers), following the training this increased to 84% indicating a strong 41% increase in the knowledge.

The Director of DoA Zummar, Mr Ali added that increasing the farmer's knowledge and capacities on agricultural related topics was one of the key achievements of this project. 90% of the farmers trained mentioned that biggest benefit was the increased understanding of agricultural management, 68% also mentioned that their crop is less infected by pests as they have improved understanding of pest control. One third of them are now actively implementing new and improved method of irrigated agriculture, being better prepared and organized for the cultivating/harvest season, which as a result has increased their harvest and improved their practical skills. The satisfaction with the agricultural trainings was extremely high and the only additional comments asked for further trainings and to intensify the curriculum (extended periods, more topics, offering the same training to a larger number of people in more areas etc.).

Outcome 2: Income generation - Resident and returnee farmers living in Sinjar and Telafar districts are provided with skills and capacities to sustainable income generation through increase of on farm income and thus local economy strengthened.

Target Indicators	Actual Achievement
1,120 farmers can take advantage of marketing opportunities through improved access to 2 functional, regional marketing centers and are therefore enabled to sustainably and independently secure and improve income significantly through improving prices in real terms paid to farmers.	2 market centers were rehabilitated ensuring 1184 participating farmers access to more regional marketing centers.
1,120 farmers (and thereof at least 10 % women) are trained in basic accounting and financial management and can demonstrate and apply their knowledge in their work.	1184 farmers (and thereof 43% women) are trained in basic accounting and financial management.

First component of the project aimed to establish food security by providing agricultural inputs and specialized training with the aims of increasing irrigated land and agricultural production. During the April PDM, it was found that 51% of the farmers considered farming their main source of income, the figure further increased during final evaluation, when 64% respondents claimed their main income originated from selling agricultural production. However, the number of farmers growing commercial crops (for the sole purpose of selling) was relatively low during PDM – merely 13% (predominantly wheat, barley, tomatoes, cucumber, corn and watermelon). The final evaluation carried out among the greenhouse and open field owners however found that 65% of these farmers are growing commercial crops, with even the owners of kitchen gardens noticing an increase from the profits of farming compared to 2018. On average, they were selling 53% of their total harvest with majority (60%) claiming that this is a larger share of their products than previously sold in 2018.

Depending on the size of the harvest, the farmers would sell it either in their own village, nearby market centres of Ayadiya, Kohorta or Zummar or in the event of bigger harvest in larger further away market centres such as Rabia, Telafar or Mosul. This is a shift as only Rabia and Mosul dominated the preferred choice of market in the baselines conducted in 2018. **69% of the farmers indeed admitted that they have now have access to more market centres and can now easily sell their crops in the local markets**, confirming the achievement of first indicator for Output 2. Quarter of these farmers however mentioned that the biggest obstacle is the low or decreased price in the markets, associated with the current economic situation due to the Covid-19 related restrictions.

Comparing the financial situation of the farmers in 2018 while gathering the baseline data, 60% of the questioned had no source of income, with 35% having low income between \$200-400 per month with 90% having loans averaging \$7400 on average mainly due to rebuilding their houses after immediate return. The final evaluation established the average monthly income at \$227, which is still at the lower end of scale, however no indication of “no income” was stated and 57% of the farmers estimated their income from farming to have increased compared to 2018. 73% of the farmers still have loans with an average amount of \$2000, considerable decreased from the beginning of the project.

In addition to improving the income and access to the participating farmers, the restoration of the two market centers directly benefitted the 64 business owners in Ayadiya and 29 agribusiness owners in Kohorta. As Ayadiya market was not operational prior to restoration, only the household income was asked of the business owners, 16% had no source of income with remaining 84% belonged to low-income group making between \$200-400 per month. During the need’s assessments for Kohorta, the business income, expenses and profit was asked as the market was operating with limited capacities. The shopkeepers estimated the average profit to be \$100 per month.

Ayadiya shop owners estimated their current household income to be at \$265, still in the low-income group and the profit from the business to be between \$250-\$300. 41% however

estimated the income from the business to have risen in the last two years, with the rest predicting it to be similar. The current household income for the Kohorta shop owners was slightly lower at \$206 and the profit from the businesses was estimated at \$200-\$250, which according to several of them is more than a year or two ago. The shop owners in both locations were also in debt (average \$2390) due to rebuilding their houses, restarting their businesses and for medical costs. They estimated the loans to slightly lower than prior to restoration of their shops and the reliance on debts to have decreased. These amounts are similar with the amounts from farmers as discussed in the previous section.

Marketing and Financial Management trainings

To enable the farmers to better understand the market forces and promoting their agricultural products, they were also trained on marketing as part of the training packages. From the 1184 farmers participated, 71% reported increased understanding of market forces, with more than third mentioning that they now better at presenting their products and started to sell directly instead of using agencies or middleman with better capabilities to sell larger quantities. Number of farmers also added that they are now using more market centers to sell their products.

Similarly, the same 1184 farmers participated in the financial training sessions learning to keep records, manage and control their daily household as well as farm finances to ensure higher profits, better control over the cost and larger reinvestment. It was established at baseline that only 5% of the farmers were keeping any written records, predominantly because of lack of knowledge or not understanding the need or importance of it. **93% of the farmers (including workers) started keeping their records after the training**, with the other 7% either not producing adequate agricultural products to sell or not finding the topic clear enough after the training.

The farmers who participated at financial training ranked the training highly efficient and beneficial primarily as they gained better control over their finances, better understanding of setting appropriate prices and learned how to invest in their agricultural activities. Few farmers also mentioned that after gaining better understanding of financial management they have managed to decrease their costs and increase their profits. The trainer Mr. Ubid agreed that the topics were relevant, the participants were rightly chosen and they now have enough financial understanding to apply their skills and knowledge in practice in terms of enhancing agricultural methods and understanding market prices, increasing their income as well as reducing living expenses.

Outcome 3. Social Cohesion - Resident and returnee villagers and communities supported to promote peaceful coexistence and strengthen social cohesion to ensure that all have equal access to irrigated agricultural production inputs and outputs.

Target Indicators	Actual Achievement
Decrease in inter-ethnic and inter-faith reported misunderstandings in the project area.	Local leaders estimate the number of incidents to have significantly decreased compared to the initial situation after returning in 2015-2016
Increase in the understanding and acceptance of people of other ethnic groups and faiths and increased awareness on gender issues in the targeted villages.	Local community that has participated in the social cohesion trainings and cross visits reports increased awareness, understanding and acceptance of people of other ethnic and religious groups.

Ssocial cohesion was the cross-cutting component of the whole project both directly addressing the conflict and mistrust by awareness raising social cohesion and conflict resolution training sessions as well as ensuring ethnical and religious diversity among the participating farmers. Hence it was vital to include the local community leaders who held respect and authority and had a strong voice to lead the change. 46 local leaders were therefore included to attend the three-day-conference on social cohesion and conflict mitigation conference. The conference encouraged interactive participation and empowered them to present their opinions and engage in debates. 12 of these leaders delivered 34 sessions within their communities, among Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, and Yazidis according to the Activity Plan created during the conference. 7 social cohesion and inclusion training sessions had been facilitated in 2018 for high school students, 12 teachers and 50 female headed households, hence the target of 40 sessions was exceeded by one extra training. 889 individuals (250 female and 639 male) participated in totals, in addition to the 92 interethnic and inter-religious cross visits that had been conducted as part of the agricultural trainings.

Good and Replicable Practice

Ethnically and religiously diverse communities that have experienced or are experiencing tensions due to recent conflicts or sectarianism need an inclusive approach to address these issues. The social cohesion and conflict mitigation conference and trainings were accompanied by agricultural cross visits and careful selection and involvement of all ethnic and religious groups to the project activities. This ensured strengthening of social interactions and encouraged the normalization of relations through daily activities.

Both the local leaders who were facilitating the trainings within their communities and the community members who had participated in the trainings agreed that the situation prior to IS in 2013 and earlier had been stable and peaceful– there was mutual respect, equal rights; it was common to live in mixed villages or even marry somebody from another ethnicity or religion and there were minimal number of disputes. The situation started to deteriorate in

2014 with IS takeover of the area and their ideology of religious extremism taking hold, daily disputes became the norm between 2014-2017 with frequent misunderstandings and lack of trust. As more families started to return in 2017, they immediately noticed the difference and distrust between different communities and even neighbors, that used to have close relationships, even between the Kurds and Arabs. Two of the local leaders mentioned that the mass return of Arab families, from the displacement camps of Mosul created a lot of anxiety and fear as people still pointed at each other for having supported or believed in the ideology of IS.

“There used be to love and mutual respect and there were a lot of job opportunities, with no reference to your background. Everybody in Zummar had equal rights and opportunities. But after returning we noticed a lot of mistrust because of religious extremism and peaching. Thankfully the situation had improved now.”

Governmental employee in Zummar

However, social life slowly started to improve as people learned to trust each other again and live as neighbors. The presence of various local and international organizations providing aid and supporting the rebuilding and livelihoods also assisted in creating awareness of the issue and advocating for equal rights and opportunities for all. Most of the leaders diplomatically state that surely all people in Telafar have equal rights, some of the female leaders however disagreed, they still feel that only a portion of the society has the same rights and opportunities and the more vulnerable are often denied the opportunities either based on their background, religion, or ethnicity.

One of the female leaders also strongly stated “There is no equal rights between both sexes in Telafar society. Society always prefers men over women because of the culture norms, customs and traditions prevailing in it.” Opinions are split on the gender issues, as some leaders feel that the role of women role has strengthened in the recent years. However, some argue that even though women have gained more rights they still need more support and empowerment and are deprived of their rights due to customs, tribal norms, and traditions of the society. One of the male leaders strongly agrees with these opinions and adds that rights regarding education, marriage and inheritance laws are very unfavorable towards the women and there is a long way to go for complete equality.

All the leaders as well as the local community that participated in the conflict resolution training sessions agreed that the situation has improved in the recent few years. People seem to be more aware of the issues and more tolerant and willing to improve relationships and live peacefully once again. **Compared to daily arguments, they now estimate number of**

incidents to have dropped significantly to either once a month or bi-monthly and the arguments to be more trivial hence often solved immediately. One of the female leaders estimates the number of arguments to have decreased by 75%. They all understand that there are still differences between the various religious and ethnic groups, but the interactions and social engagement have increased, there is more confidence, trust and understanding with the situation constantly improving.

“The main problem is the lack of support from the government and shortage of livelihood opportunities and therefore people become desperate and lose their manners and respect - fighting for survival. NGOs like ASB have created more jobs and delivered awareness sessions educating people and opening their minds to be more tolerant and accepting.”

Participant in a Focus Group Discussion

This project aim was to strengthen the sustainable resilience, social stability, and cohesion of the population in the conflict-affected communities and to create adequate and appropriate living conditions through the support of agricultural production. As described, the quantitative indicators for the first and second outcome were achieved, with exceeding the target for some activities and outputs. The achievement of the qualitative indicators for the third outcome were also confirmed by 10 KII with local community leaders and a FGD with the community members who attended social cohesion and conflict mitigation training sessions. **The project has therefore been effective in improving the living conditions by ensuring food security and improved livelihood opportunities for the target group as well as improving social cohesion.** In total 2248 direct beneficiaries have benefitted from the project, with an average family size of 7.4 people in the target area this amounts to 16,635 indirect beneficiaries. In addition, the 8251 households (55,769 individuals) in Phase I and Phase II of Al Jazeera could be added towards the count of indirect beneficiaries.

Key findings

- Through agricultural inputs, the project effectively supported 1213 farmers in increasing the size of their irrigated land by 55% (the target was 50%) and agricultural production by 40% (the target was 20%)
- As part of the market rehabilitations, 90 small shop owners were supported in renovating their shops, thus supporting 630 indirect beneficiaries that benefit from the small business incomes. In addition to 1184 farmers who admit increased access and larger variety of marketplaces.
- The objectives related to social cohesion also proved appropriately realistic despite the challenging context. The local community leaders jointly reported the number of incidents to have decreased as the community has increased awareness and understanding of social cohesion.

2.3 Efficiency

Value for Money

The Value for Money (VfM) is determined by four key terms that are widely used by all agencies - Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity to determine if the activities of the project provided value for money spent on the project. In assessing this project, the evaluation looked at economy and efficiency.

- *Cost Economy:* the budget of the project was 1,700,000 euros. ASB and Harikar followed procurement procedures to get the best quality for the price including price quotations and tendering. Echoing qualitative data gathered through the evaluation findings from the PDM survey also confirm **beneficiaries' satisfaction with the quality of products/inputs** received through project (greenhouses, irrigation tools, agricultural tools and equipment, training materials) where 88% of the beneficiaries interviewed declared being "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the project and the inputs distributed during the project. The few that were not satisfied specifically mentioned the poor quality of the seeds provided. 69% were very satisfied with the trainings and training materials, plus still using the training materials that were rated as of very high quality. Staff salaries also remained within the average range when compared with other projects in the country and the staffing structure is filled with qualified personnel. Therefore, overall, the action is found cost economic.
- *Cost Efficiency:* The direct costs related to program activities program comprised around 50% of the budget. The unit cost per directly supported farmers (1213) is 521 euros per farmer. While the rehabilitation of the whole work for the Al Jazeera channel cost was EUR 617 per 1 square kilometer, including capacity building for the DOWR.
- *Cost Effectiveness;* As described in the section of Effectiveness, all the indicators were accomplished.

Time and Human Resources

The project scheduled to commence in June 2017, was delayed until August 2017 till the project team was recruited and the resources were scheduled. However due to access restrictions related to the Kurdistan region's independence referendum in September 2017, the staff only gained access to the target area and started the first activities in November 2017. The first months were therefore invested in administrative and project setup, remotely from Duhok.

Overall, there were several delays and changes to the original timeline, firstly as the renovation of Al Jazeera Irrigation Project was left as the ultimate component of the project

due to external circumstances. Furthermore, the complete lockdown and restrictions of movement during the last five months of the project, due to Covid-19, severely delayed and hindered the project activities as all work was stopped. The Kohorta market renovations, rehabilitation works in Al Jazeera and several training sessions therefore only finished in the last weeks of August 2020. Even though the project duration is evaluated to be of correct length to ensure consistent support and follow up for the farmers and guarantee the sustainability, the delays in the beginning and end of the project (both due to external, not predicted factors), challenged the completion of the project objectives.

Regarding the project team recruited by Harikar, it is recommended for ASB to attend the recruitment and ensure better gender balance (to better address and communicate with the female beneficiaries) and assist in finding the most suitable locally positioned candidates. The Project Manager, being based in Duhok, spent considerable amount of time on travelling to the project area and during the final months of lockdown was not able to exit Duhok, hence leaving the sole field officer responsible for all activities for a period of five months. The MEAL officer, similarly, based in Duhok, was not familiar with the target area neither conducted any field or monitoring visits for direct feedback and observation. This issue was also highlighted as an area of improvement by ASB Livelihoods Program Manager.

Interviewed stakeholders in the evaluation spoke highly of the team's commitment and professionalism and reported that they felt safe to share any feedback or concerns with the project staff and all their questions were answered promptly and appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems and Processes

The project monitoring was assigned to the implementing partner Harikar as it was established in the initial stages of the project that they had a strong MEAL department with relevant SOPs and guidelines and capacity to provide to continuous monitoring regarding achievement of indicators, timely implementation of activities and compliance with the finance plan. Regrettably the first MEAL officer responsible for the project left with not sufficient handover for the second MEAL officer who took over the project. It was moreover found that there was insufficient coordination and communication between Harikar's Project Manager and MEAL officer, the PM also highlighted this as a weakness during his semi structured interview.

As the ASB recruited an M&E Manager in March 2020, the first PDMs were swiftly carried out for Ayadiya shop owners and farmers who had received agricultural inputs. Strong coordination and mentoring strengthened the capacities of Harikar's MEAL officer with special focus on data management and reporting skills. As requested by Harikar senior management, training was also organized for all Harikar's MEAL staff for capacity building.

The reviewed monitoring and evaluation tools were found suitable for activity/output management and adherence to operational plans. Room however remains for improved and updated questions for baseline, as the various versions differed greatly and hindered the

setting of appropriate baseline results for certain indicators. The M&E Plan should also be established and followed with set deadlines for midterm evaluations and PDMs including the setting up of the complains and feedback mechanism at the beginning of the project.

Coordination and Capitalization

ASB Livelihoods Program Manager was actively engaging in cluster and inter-cluster coordinating platforms and regularly attended the monthly meetings for Emergency Livelihoods and Food Security to avoid duplication and strengthen programming and coordination. Harikar's field team had very strong coordination links with the DoA and the local community leaders such as mayors, mukhtars and tribal leaders and thoughtfully involved all relevant authorities in decision-making.

Steering and coordination committee was established in the beginning of the project with representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DoA), local authorities, representatives of Harikar and ASB to review the assessment, the planned activities of the project and ensure the consideration of all interests in project planning and during the implementation. Several meetings were also held with FAO to ensure synergy and avoid overlapping regarding the renovation and building works of Al Jazeera Irrigation Project.

2.4 Impact

This project has contributed to numerous areas of positive impact as described below.

At individual and household level

Through supporting the revitalization of the irrigated agricultural production, the project contributed to the resilience of the target households increasing their livelihood opportunities and strengthening the food security. **The evaluation captured a general improvement of their livelihood conditions – 54% farmers noted a strong increase in the income from farming during recent years, 52% agreed that their living conditions had improved,** and they are better able to meet the household needs. As majority of the farmers had returned in 2017, they found their houses and farms to be in a problematic state and in need of serious renovation and rebuilding. 58% of the farmers estimate the condition of their farm to be better now, with annual harvest having increased by 73%. The vicious circle of debt, not demolished, was however significantly decreased as the average loan amount of \$7400 decreased to \$2000 by the end of the project. The figures were lower during PDM at \$1300, however increased again with the economic difficulties caused by Covid-19.

As established in the effectiveness section, the farmers who were supported with agricultural inputs increased their irrigated areas by 60% and agricultural production by 20%. Additionally, all the farmers who had participated in the trainings that they estimate much improved skills

and knowledge following the sessions and higher level of confidence making them more optimistic about the improvement of their conditions. **The evaluator also found that the capacity building training helped to develop positive attitudes among the poor families in project locations, reduced stigma and discrimination and increased empowerment.** The participants' decision-making skills were strengthened, thereby helping them to claim their rights and entitlements. With their self-respect and dignity boosted, they felt empowered. Beneficiaries are more vocal and confident now than before; they have developed a "we can solve the problem" attitude.

The farmers from the villages surrounding Al Jazeera Irrigation Project similarly exceeded the project targets, with the irrigated land having increased by 55% during the last two years. Majority of the farmers also added that they are now able to grow a larger variety of crops and have significantly increased the harvest (on average by 27%).

"The biggest impact of this project was strengthening of the agricultural sector in Telafar district by restoring the access to water through Al Jazeera Irrigation Project. The farmers have increased their agricultural production and more families have started to return from displacement knowing their source of livelihoods has been restored.

Abdul Majed Ahmed, Director of the Ministry of Water, Ninewa

The 90 shop owners in two renovated market centers of Ayadiya and Kohorta have also improved their living conditions as the income and profit from the small business has increased and reliance to debts decreased. Almost half of them (44%), mainly in Ayadiya, indicated their household situation to have improved in the last years, with Kohorta's market renovation still too recent to have immediate impact. Shop owners in Ayadiya also mentioned having increased the number of employees, either paid or family members as their operations have strengthened. This has also enabled them to offer a larger variety of products and increase their daily sales. Shop owners in both destinations feel more empowered and confident as a result of this project, with 75% having plans to expand in the future by opening new branches or offering larger variety of products or services.

"When ASB supported me to reopen my business and fixed the walls and floor of the shop, I only had enough money to buy some women clothes. Now when I have started to make profit, I have expanded, and I am also offering accessories and cosmetics. I plan to start selling children's clothes too in the future!"

41-year-old shop owner and a father of 7 in Ayadiya.

Equally the **social cohesion and conflict mitigation training sessions had a long-lasting impact by decreasing discrimination, building trust, and increasing understanding and acceptance.** The evaluator also found that the information and content was often shared with

family members and neighbors and even passed on to children during informal conversations ensuring the sustainability and strong feeling of “ownership”. The project also encouraged and empowered women by supporting a high number of women, 34% of the total 1213 direct beneficiaries were female against the original target of 10%, hence supporting the vulnerable female-headed households. By providing them with a source of livelihoods or raising awareness and building capacity.

This equals to 1,213 direct beneficiaries with agricultural inputs and 8,976 indirect beneficiaries, with the average family size of 7.4 members, who have benefitted from agricultural outputs, training, or awareness sessions during the lifespan of this project. In addition to the people that benefited from the Al Jazeera irrigation system 62,333, adding up to 71,309 indirect beneficiaries.

At the community level

The project strengthened agricultural sector by motivating farmers to remain working in their farms with improved methods and technology hence contributing to the domestic agricultural production within Iraq. The farming was and is remains a full-time job for the farming communities in Ninewa and despite the frights of the DoA, none of the questioned farmers have plans to abandon farming and move to more profitable or easier professions.

The social cohesion activities have strengthened the community and encouraged social interactions to resume between different ethnic and religious groups as the conflicts have decreased from daily incidents to monthly. The 889 individuals who have participated in the social cohesion and conflict mitigation training sessions in addition to the farmers who conducted cross-visits as part of their agricultural training sessions have shared the

“Positive changes have taken place in the community of Zummar because of these trainings and will continue after the project is over. ”

Local female community leader working in child protection.

knowledge with their immediate family members and continue to be the advocates for change and for peaceful co-existence. These educated and enlightened individuals have already started to impact their immediate circles and will continue acting as role models, educators, and mediators in their immediate communities. The strong links formed between various ethnic and religious groups during the trainings will continue and inspire more similar examples.

At the institutional level

The capacity of the DoA was severely weakened by the occupation of IS with the head office for Ninewa temporarily moved to Duhok governorate and large material losses (offices,

equipment, tools, and agricultural infrastructure) as well as weakened capacities and strained relationship with the farmers. It was established during the baseline that the participating farmers were lacking knowledge of government plans and estimated the level of governmental support to be very low. Extensive cooperation and collaboration were ensured with the DoA staff from the beginning of the project from consultations for village selection to assistance with training curriculum and materials. The project worked closely on addressing KRI agricultural policy and strengthening the capacity of DoA and its employees.

As previously discussed, the project also supported MoWR strategy and objectives for Al Jazeera Irrigation Project and directly impacted the size of irrigated land (55% increase), increased annual agricultural harvest and therefore higher income from agriculture and strengthened living conditions.

Key Findings:

- As 2,248 individuals have directly and 16,635 indirectly benefitted from this project, it has not only improved the food security and living conditions on the individual level, but it has also strengthened the agricultural sector boosted the local economy and improved social cohesion and awareness within the diverse ethnic and religious communities.
- Collaboration with DoA and MoW and strong capacity building elements ensured the feeling of “ownership” and guaranteed the sustainability of the interventions. It also enhanced the positioning of ASB as a key actor in sustainable livelihoods in the region and promoted learning within the organization.

2.5 Sustainability

The project was formulated based on a community based participatory approach applied in all project activities/measures with the continuous involvement of the local authorities and target groups. Besides being one of the most cost-effective and economic approaches, the community-based approach also ensures empowerment of the individual farmers, community, and the local social structure by creating a sense of ownership, and therefore also contributes to the sustainability of the project.

The project has been successful to create sustainable changes in terms of promoting improved farming practices and inputs and increasing the capacities and knowledge of local farmers. The project has also achieved significant success to impact people’s dietary practices by introducing the establishment of kitchen gardens. These behavioral changes would have long lasting impact on the process of building resilience to food insecurity.

Farmers with increased income and spending power will continue to provide livelihoods for their families, but also ensure the revival and sustainability of their downstream support infrastructure and businesses and this will lead to the real and integrated revitalization of the area. The rehabilitated structures, provided tools, agricultural inputs and training materials will be owned by the Department of Agriculture and the local farmers. Furthermore, the knowledge, skills and capacities created during the trainings further contribute to the sustainability of the project.

In addition to the individual resident and returnee farmers as individual agricultural actors, the sustainability of the project lies with the local government, Directorate of Agriculture and Ministry of Water Resources. The DoA of Ninewa was closely involved with the project from the project design phase through implementation. The agricultural trainer, Mr. Ubid was the previous Director of Agriculture for Zummar sub-district before establishing himself as a trainer hence having very strong understanding of the needs and gaps of the local farming community and being able to tailor the session most appropriately.

Mr. Maher Ali, the Director of DoA in Zummar praised the project in terms of relevance and efficiency and complementing their agricultural development strategy for the region, however hesitated if they can replicate similar scale interventions in the near future due to limited or non-existent funding from the governmental budget. He marked the relationship with the farmers to be adequate and not having changed in the last three years with agricultural sector still in need of major investment. All the farmers agree that there is not sufficient support from DoA and the level of support and communication with the farmers has been similar with no increase in the previous three years.

Although this project directly addressed the main concerns, he estimated that more similar projects would be needed to restore the agriculture sector fully. **Additionally, he complimented the curriculum and training materials developed for the project, expressed his gratitude for the printed materials provided to DoA and planned to develop similar agricultural curriculum to be taught for more farmers in Ninewa.** Mr Ubid also added that even though there were other NGOs in the area providing agricultural trainings, this project was unique in also including financial and marketing training and distributing high quality printed materials.

Regarding the sustainability of the renovated market centres of Ayadiya and Kohorta, as previously mentioned the first belonged to the local municipality who was involved in planning and coordinated with during the restoration and received the handover when the market was completed. Kohorta market that is privately owned was handed to the owner after ensuring he filled his promise of his personal contribution – renovating the toilets for the market. Even though a small number of the renovated businesses failed to continue in **Ayadiya, it has developed into an active regional market centre with additional potential to develop and strengthen the local economy even further.** Similarly, Kohorta market is located on strategic location acting as the primary market for 10 nearby villages and has already

showed potential in the previous year as it evolved from a vegetable market and started offering chicken and livestock for sale.

As Al Jazeera Irrigation Project is under the ownership of the Ministry of Water Resources, strong coordination and involvement was vital from the beginning to ensure appropriate activities were planned. MoWR engineer responsible for the project, Mr. Jassim was following up directly on all work stages to evaluate the quality and confirm that it was done to a high standard. The sustainability of Al Jazeera Irrigation Project lies directly with MoWR who has a specific branch responsible for regular monitoring, check-up and periodical repairs and maintenance of blocked or broken channels or pump stations.

The local leaders having participated in the social cohesion conference were exceedingly optimistic and keen on sharing the knowledge with their communities. One of the leaders mentioned that he is still in touch with the other participants he had met during the event and expects strong connections to remain between them for the foreseeable future. Several of them mentioned their plans to share the new knowledge and ideas gained with their family members, neighbours and colleagues and suggested ideas for future activities and interventions.

Mr. Sharaf, director of DoA Sinjar, was scheduled to facilitate a training session for the DoA extension officers (all Yazidis) as part of capacity building for his department. However, he also invited several Arab tribal leaders making this session historic as one of the first social cohesion events between Yazidis and Arabs in Sinjar after years of mistrust due to IS occupation and the genocide of Yazidis. Samples like these demonstrate the willingness and readiness of local leaders to be the frontrunners advocating for change, changing perceptions, and building trust. ASB and Harikar remain in strong contact with all the leaders as Harikar with a long history in the field will undoubtedly continue to work on these issues within KRI beyond the end of this project.

Key findings

- ASB and Harikar have liaised with the DoA of Zummar to ensure the sustainability and continuation of agricultural support and trainings to the local farming community using the materials and lessons learned as part of this project.
- Local ownership of the Al Jazeera Irrigation project, by the government body (MoWR) is the key to sustainability, as team of engineers present at the site, will provide regular maintenance and repairs.
- Local community leaders have taken strong ownership over conflict mitigation and raising awareness on social cohesion and will continue to promote and educate even after this project is finished.
- ASB has followed all the planned exit strategies for the three outcomes to ensure the sustainability of the positive effects.

3. Conclusion

While assessing the ASB's thematic projects' contribution to the reduction of inequalities and poverty for women and men, the evaluator concludes that ASB has made a satisfactory performance towards that direction. RLSFS project in the region, and particularly in project target area of Telafar district, by implementing climate resilient on-farm and off-farm based intervention has contributed to bring gradual increment in the income of many poor families as well as improving their quality of life, it has contributed to save them to escape from the vicious cycle of poverty as well as to be resilient for coping with future crisis.

The project aligned with humanitarian response priorities and plans in the country, with strategic direction set by the government of Iraq and was relevant to ASB' mission and strategic objectives for Iraq. The project design reflected a strong understanding of the different target groups' needs and vulnerabilities and acknowledged institutional capacities of governmental structures with strong focus on capacity building. Importantly, all programmatic themes are found very relevant in the context of Iraq and they should be continued in one-way or another. However, creating synergies between these themes is important.

The project proved to be effective in realizing its objective of strengthening sustainable resilience and social stability as well as achieving its quantitative and qualitative indicators for the three outcomes of improved food security, strengthened income generation and increased social cohesion and awareness.

The evaluation finds the project to be efficient in terms of finances spent; by providing good value for money and increasing the direct unit cost per farmer against the original budget. There were however several suggestions for improvement regarding the human resources and recruitment of project staff including preference to locally based candidates. Monitoring and evaluation of the project was found inconsistent, as insufficient data existed from the first year of the project, which hindered the setting of baselines figures.

The project significantly impacted the target groups by improving household resilience through provision of livelihood opportunities and strengthening of capacities. It contributed to women empowerment by supporting female-headed households in assessing economic and livelihood generating opportunities. Social cohesion was strengthened in the ethnically and religiously diverse communities by conflict mitigation and awareness rising sessions, with immediate results of decreased number of incidents. The project enhanced ASB's positioning as a key actor in sustainable livelihoods in Iraq, while providing invaluable organizational learning for future projects. The renovated market centres are expected to further develop and increase the number of businesses, therefore become financially successful and strengthen the local economy. The strengthened capacities of DoA to deliver technical

trainings and improve communications with farmers will ensure the sustainability of the improvements made to the agricultural sector, similarly the MoWR will ensure the sustainability of the Al Jazeera Irrigation project with regular maintenance and monitoring.

Despite all these achievements, there are also a few areas where ASB requires further improvements. Some of the areas for improvements include.

Among the key features of ASB's intervention in the region, the evaluator concludes that it should continue its multilayer and multifaceted intervention approach, as this has been the driving force to make positive impacts at different levels as can be directly seen from the impact and success of this project. However, there needs to be a balance between local, national, and regional level of interventions, so that they could feed into each other for influencing government policies and projects as well as create synergy between these different layers of project. Multifaceted intervention approach also requires some good balance between different activities, as the lack of balance and synergy between them make the project with full of activities rather than an important instrument for achieving desired change.

Similarly, other key features of the ASB's intervention such as creating linking, learning, and sharing space for civil society organizations (CSO) as well as beneficiaries, opportunities for networking and collaborative actions among NGO partner, and capacity building initiatives should be continued even in the future. All these approaches are necessary for strong and effective civil society advocacy at the local, national, and regional level for improving and amending governments' policies in favour of poor and marginalised people. ASB should also strategically plan how to equally increase its engagement with government agencies as well as CSOs.

It is also concluded that ASB has worked with relevant right-holders, but to magnify its impact it needs to directly work with political leaders, government officials, and youth and student political and social leaders who are considered as strong force to bring positive changes at the local level. Regarding its geographical focus in future programmatic cycle, ASB have done an extensive mapping regarding the concentration of other INGOs and development agencies working in more or less similar theme and has the sense to pick to those locations where there is no or limited presence of other agencies.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations are divided into two sections where first section provides strategic and programmatic recommendations under each programmatic theme, and later section provides recommendations for improving the overall ASB programming in the future programmatic cycle.

4.1 Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security Project

Considering the overall analysis, the evaluator concludes that ASB's RLSFS project had focused on resilient livelihood by encompassing humanitarian response, business development, economic growth, and value chain development.

Strategic/Policy Recommendations

- **Renovation of district level market centres should be on a higher outcome level** and include a larger number of activities leading to this. The restoration of 90 small shops contributed to the local economy, however the shop owners would have needed more support, guidance, and include financial and entrepreneurial training for the business owners.
- The highly successful **cross cutting social cohesion component should be replicated** in future livelihoods and resilience projects in ethnically and religiously diverse target areas. Though it is recommended to facilitate the training and awareness sessions throughout the project, starting from the first year, to ensure timely completion of all sessions as well to provide ample time for evaluating the impacts.
- ASB should develop its staff and partner's **capacity on disability and inclusion issues** and incorporate these strategic guidelines to the project activities, also by setting direct targets on the number of disabled beneficiaries to be included.
- As recommended and requested by the DoA as well as by several farmers, ASB should consider **including livestock component to its future livelihoods programs** to diversify the farming activities, help raise whole-farm productivity and simultaneously strengthen the food security by providing a steady stream of food as well as generate revenue for the households.
- Even as the farmers were trained on finances and agricultural marketing as part of this project, there could have been stronger link with the private sector and market.
- To continue building resilience of the farming community, especially regarding extreme weather conditions such as floods, droughts and heat or cold waves, it is important to continue addressing these factors limiting crop production. **Climate resilient crop varieties play a crucial role in coping with climate variability** in agriculture along with other adaption strategies in crop production and efficient management of agricultural resources⁹.
- **High yielding varieties (HYV) with enhanced tolerance to extreme weather conditions will also increase the agricultural production and the resilience** of the farming community to sustainably carry on the agricultural activities. HYVs of agricultural crops not only ensure higher crops yield per area, but also improved

⁹ Natinal Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture

http://www.nicraicar.in/nicrarevised/images/publications/Tbu_Climate%20Resilient%20Crop%20Varieties%20for%20Sustainable.pdf

response to fertilizers as well as being more resistant to pest attacks¹⁰, an issue highlighted by both the farmers and the DoA.

4.2 Programmatic Recommendations

- Awareness raising and knowledge sharing project: Knowledge should be channelized through climate-smart field schools, participatory videos and use of social media. Along with the smallholder farmers, capacity building should encompass agro-vet dealers and technicians at District Agriculture Development Office to ensure market monitoring for price, adulterants, and expiry dates of seeds. This will also further strengthen the capacities of the DoA extension officers and improve the communication with the farmers.
- Advocacy on crop and livestock insurance schemes: Crop insurance is paramount to enhance the confidence of farmers for large investment and secure the income, especially in less developed countries. Such schemes are designed to compensate the losses suffered by farmers as the result of occurrence or an adverse event that affects the production and profitability. They should be properly integrated with existing schemes of agricultural credit that regrettably is lacking within Iraq. Access to credit is difficult outside government ad hoc subsidized credit programs: private capital investment resources are lacking, as are credit initiatives available to farmers. The near absence of institutional credit has made the cost of capital prohibitive for agricultural producers and discouraged private investment.¹¹
- Foster integrated aquaculture system: To strengthen the livelihoods of farmers, an integrated aquaculture system combining irrigated agriculture and livestock should be introduced to utilise optimum levels of productivity. Livestock (sheep and goats, cattle, camels, buffaloes), inland fisheries and backyard poultry raising are important as a source of protein and income for the rural population. Before the war, large state owned industrial enterprises existed for dairy and poultry production around the main cities
- Continue capacity building and cooperation with government institutions The capacity of DoA and MoWR has remarkably deteriorated over the past two decades with not sufficient institutional cooperation and coordination in agricultural planning and implementation. The weak institutional support has translated into a drastic reduction of the performance and coverage of the research and extension services, animal health and artificial insemination centers, plant quarantine and disease control mainly due to lack of staff incentives and physical infrastructure.¹² There is a lack of up to date and relevant statistics regarding the agricultural sector which also hinders the strategic planning.

¹⁰ Genetic Improvement of Vegetables Using Transgenic Technology

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/high-yielding-varieties>

¹¹ Iraq Agricultural sector note, FAO

<http://www.fao.org/3/i2877e/i2877e.pdf>

¹² Iraq Agricultural sector note, FAO - <http://www.fao.org/3/i2877e/i2877e.pdf>

Annexes

Annex 1: Impact Evaluation of Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security project and Context Analysis

1. 1. Background

The project of “Strengthening the resilience of conflict-affected residents and returnees in newly accessible areas through improving food security, livelihoods and solidarity”, with a budget of \$1,700,000 lasted from 08/2017-08/2020. The overall objective of the project is the strengthening of sustainable resilience, social stability, and cohesion of the population in affected and returnee communities in newly accessible areas in North Ninewa governorate to create adequate and appropriate living conditions through the support of agricultural production.

2. Purpose, objective, and evaluation questions

2.1 The objective of the evaluation

In line with the ASB headquarters commitment for country specific planning from 2019, commitments given to the donors, government and partner agencies in the approved project, the independent evaluation of the projects will assess the level of progress being made towards the achievement of project impact, outcomes and outputs. In addition to the formal requirements, it is best practice that a thorough review is undertaken to identify areas to continue, improve and design new similar project in the years to come.

The evaluation will focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results, and sustainability of project implementation; lessons learned about project design, implementation, and management.

The evaluation is scheduled for early to mid-2020, prior to the project end date. The results of the evaluation are intended to help to design country specific projects/ projects in Iraq and identify the need for any further technical assistance to support the strengthening of resilience in the above countries. The evaluation should also help to understand the relative merits of different implementation options and thematic approaches.

To assess the effectiveness and outcome of ASB’s thematic projects in Iraq, particularly in North Ninewa, with a specific focus on their contribution to strengthening the resilience social stability and cohesion, and to provide a Context Analysis of the draft Concept Note for the new Country Project, in view of the findings from the evaluation.

2.2 The purpose

- To carry out a consolidated evaluation of ASB Iraq Country Office’s thematic project of Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security
- To use the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and context analysis to provide substantial guidance to the design of future Iraq country projects.
- To provide findings that will feed into the ASB organisational learning.

2.3. Standard ASB Project evaluation questions

Relevance

Key question:

- To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the needs and priorities of target groups, including the structural causes of rights violations in the given context?
- To what extent are the project strategies relevant to ASB's strategic goals and priorities, relevant national policies, and priorities, and in keeping with international human rights and humanitarian standards?
- To what extent is the project portfolio relevant to the project objectives?

Sub questions:

- To what extent are the interventions aligned with international human rights and humanitarian law?
- To what extent are the interventions compliant with national and local frameworks that advance human rights and gender equality?
- To what extent were project interventions informed by the needs and interests of discriminated groups among the extreme poor?
- To what extent was disaggregated data strategically used to ensure relevant targeting and interventions?
- To what extent were relevant barriers and causes to inequalities, discrimination, and impoverishment of the rights-holders addressed under the different projects?
- To what extent were the mechanisms for ensuring meaningful participation of and accountability to the targeted rights-holders relevant?
- What is the added value of ASB, and the project approach (as opposed to project approach) in the projects?
- To what extent and how is there synergy and cohesion between the projects within and between the thematic projects?
- In what way does the project strategies contribute to the strategic goals of ASB (project specific goals, the Rights Based Approach and Gender Equality goals) as per ASB's international strategy for the period under evaluation?

Effectiveness

Key questions:

- 1) To what extent were the project objectives achieved at outcome level (and if verifiable at impact level?)

Sub questions:

- To what extent did the projects' theory of change (implicit or explicit) and/or results framework reflect a rights-based logic?
- To what extent were the participatory and accountability mechanisms used effective at reaching the rights-holders?
- To what extent have the interventions under all thematic projects contributed to the empowerment of rights-holders to claim or access their rights and entitlements and of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations?
- What results were achieved in terms of reducing the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination? How did project activities contribute to this achievement?
- To what extent has the monitoring undertaken during the projects provided management with sufficient information to follow progress towards the desired results?
- To what extent has monitoring been used in communication with beneficiaries?

- To what extent has ASB (RO and HQ) been an effective manager of the projects (strategic planning, staffing, resource management, monitoring, partnerships, etc.)?

2) How have partnerships been enhanced because of the projects? (ASB and partners, partners and rights holders, rights holders and duty bearers, and partners among themselves?

Sub questions:

- Based on what criteria were the partners selected?
- What is their involvement and decision-making power in the planning and implementation of the project, including the cross-cutting activities? Do partner platforms fulfil their purpose as identified by the project strategies?
- Has ASB's support to partners' capacity and organisational development been effective? Is ASB responsive to needs identified by partners? Does the support affect in a positive way the partners' organisation and capacity to implement its projects?
- Do the partners have the right skills, commitment, and constituency to contribute to the achievement of the goals in the projects? Has the project approach contributed to the effectiveness of the partners?
- How effective has ASB been at strengthening partner's strategic advocacy work e.g. through capacity-development, through facilitating links to decision-makers, networks, international fora etc.?
- Have the projects stimulated relations between partners in any significant way?
- How has this affected the project's results and/or the partners' organisations?
- Assess the extent to which a project or project contributes to delivering ASB's Accountability Framework, in relation to Sharing information, Participation and Handling complaints.

Efficiency

Key question:

- Has the project approach been a cost-efficient way to implement development assistance?

Sub questions:

- What are the overall costs of the projects compared to the number of rights-holders?
- How economically have resources been converted to results?
- Were the human and financial resources adequate for implementing the projects?
- To what extent can one argue that the interventions were cost-effective, and the resources used in an efficient way to reach the most discriminated groups and facilitate their effective participation and to address the rights issues identified in the project strategies?
- Were there challenges during implementation in addressing the human rights and gender equality concerns of the rights-holders and were resources used efficiently to address these challenges during implementation?
- Have project activities adequately built on the assets and positive strategies of the targeted rights holders (men and women)?
- Have risks been properly identified and well-managed? With hindsight, what could have been done better in this regard?

Impact

Key question:

- What, if any, have been the wider social, economic, human rights and political impact of the projects?

Sub questions:

- What evidence is there that the interventions contributed to rights-holders increasing their enjoyment of their rights; of duty-bearers better performing their duties and obligations; and of accountability mechanisms being strengthened?
- What evidence is there that this has contributed to reducing inequalities and poverty at local or national levels?
- What evidence is there of changes in gender inequalities e.g. in access and use of resources, in decision-making, in division of labour etc.?
- Were there any unintended positive or negative results of the projects?
- Were there any unintended effects on groups not included in the intervention?
- Are the rights-holders targeted satisfied with the achievements (in terms of impact and process)?
- How many women and men have benefitted from project activities?

Sustainability

- To what extent have projects furthered institutional changes (changes in laws, policies, practices, resource levels) for furthering human rights and gender equality? To what extent are these changes sustainable?
- To what extent has the intervention strengthened citizen claiming and monitoring of human rights and gender equality? To what extent is this likely to continue once the projects end?
- To what extent has the projects contributed to attitudinal changes that will further the protection of human rights and gender equality among the poorest after this intervention has ended?
- To what extent did the projects manage to shift power balances and contribute to the redistribution of resources, power etc. to more discriminated/excluded groups?

Other context specific project evaluation questions

- If country specific issues cannot be addressed in the sections above, please make sure they are addressed through additional relevant questions here.

3. 3. Context Analysis: Based on the findings from the evaluation, as well as the draft Concept Note for the new country project submitted by ASB, prepare a Context Analysis addressing the following questions –

- Verify the relevance and feasibility of the project focus proposed by ASB in its draft Concept Note
- If the suggested project focus is found to be problematic, this should be discussed, and the office should be given a chance to refocus the project outline.
- Analyse the identified problem and any observed new trends
- Analyse the selected rights-holders and the extent and impact of the problem on them, including differences noted due to gender and/other identity characteristics (age, ethnicity, religion, economic status, etc.)

- Identify and elaborate the rights issues and relevant international human rights standards that need to be in focus
- Analyse the immediate and root causes for the problem, including any discriminatory norms and practices (gender and others)
- Analyse key barriers within institutions and within the social and organising practices of rights-holders and organisations that represent them. Note any non-compliance with relevant human rights standards
- Identify and analyse key legal and moral duty-bearers
- Identify any key opportunities (events, new actors, and/or developments) within the programming period that could be maximised for addressing the problem
- Analyse the response and priorities of regional and international actors, other international, regional, and local organisations particularly active on the issue
- Identify the comparative advantage of ASB and its partners and provide recommendations for ASB's support in the area
- Identify any risks that a project of this nature might face and suggest ways that the risks can be managed or alleviated.

4. The way forward

Key question:

- What are the key recommendations for the design of the future ASB country project?

Sub questions:

- How can synergies between the thematic activities, partners, geographic areas, and the local-national level be improved?
- How can useful and necessary regional project components be maintained under the new project approach?
- Which innovative approaches and new technologies could be tested and/or adopted in the new country project?
- Please provide recommendations to the mix of partner profiles for a future country project.
- What elements/activities could/should be carried forward in the country project to sustain the benefits and results of the current projects?

5. Scope

The evaluation assignment is planned to take place from **15th July – 31st July.**

The evaluation team will visit the project locations covering all thematic areas. Partners will be consulted through questionnaires and Skype interviews (if required).

The evaluation will cover the Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security project and activities in terms of assessing the extent to which the results created at project and activity level has contributed to the achievement of the objectives and outcomes of the project.

1. Outcome 1: Food Security - With irrigated agricultural production restored and increased in selected communities of Sinjar and Telafar districts, access to nutritious food is improved and livelihood can be independently secured.

2. Outcome 2: Income generation - Resident and returnee farmers living in Sinjar and Telafar districts are provided with skills and capacities to sustainable income generation through increase of on farm income and thus local economy strengthened.
3. Outcome 3. Social Cohesion - Resident and returnee villagers and communities supported to promote peaceful coexistence and strengthen social cohesion to ensure that all have equal access to irrigated agricultural production inputs and outputs

5. 5. Evaluation Methodology

It is expected that the evaluator will further develop the methodology to be applied within this consultancy, but the below key elements should guide the development of the proposed methodology. The team should consist of external consultants, internal ASB staff and partner representatives led by an external team leader. It will be up to the external consultants to design and facilitate the process and the external consultant shall have the right to conduct independent interviews and exercises with no internal participation as they see fit. It will also be the responsibility of the external team to draw the final conclusions and recommendation based on the findings of the total team.

Participatory methodologies must be employed to ensure that the rights holders targeted by the projects effectively participate in the evaluation process.

The method developed must also be gender sensitive and it must describe how it fits the purpose of the evaluation.

In the data collection and analysis phase the team can use both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The methodology should allow for collection of data from multiple sources, like document review, stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, participatory workshops.

To facilitate the Context Analysis portion of the assignment, the following methodologies are suggested in addition:

- Desk review of Background Literature and Statistics
- A Partner/Stakeholder Workshop
- Interviews with Primary Stakeholders and Key Informants
- Participatory Assessments with the selected right holders.

6. 6. Team composition

The evaluation team is expected to consist of 2 evaluators covering human rights, advocacy, migration, food security, resilient livelihood, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian issues, preferably from the country or region. Adequate gender representation should be ensured.

The team leader and thematic specialist should possess the following expertise:

- Proven team leader skills
- Extensive experience with evaluations, reporting and design processes, including skills such as indicator development, sampling, participatory evaluation methodology, appreciative enquiry methods, focus group interviews, etc.
- Experience with multi-sectoral evaluations

- Proven experience from NGO and CBO based development assistance in Iraq.
- Proven expertise on the cross-cutting issues such as Rights Based Approach and Gender.

Further, the team should have proven expertise in the following areas (*adjust and adapt as needed*)

- Active Citizenship (local governance, gender-sensitive electoral reforms, anti-corruption and national/local budget advocacy and monitoring, legal advocacy on civil and political rights and discrimination, civil society space)
- Migrants' Rights, both regionally and globally
- Right to Food (food security including kitchen gardens and pastoralism, local savings and loans schemes, disaster risk reduction, as well as farmer field schools).
- Humanitarian action
- Anti-corruption and organisational accountability
- Organisational capacity development

Consultants' applications will be evaluated according to a specific ASB Matrix.

Annex 2: Evaluation Questionnaires for Field Research

Questionnaire Related to Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security

Key evaluation question

1. How the project has contributed to meet the ASB's overall policy goal of providing immediate humanitarian assistance and promoting voluntary returns by supporting return, reintegration and development?

Specific evaluation questions

Questionnaire Related to RLSFS

Key evaluation question

1. How the RLSFS project has contributed to meet the ASB's overall policy goal of resilient livelihoods and sustainable food security of excluded and marginalized women and men in disaster prone and food insecure areas?

Specific evaluation questions

Food security, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction

2. How and to what extent the RLSFS project has contributed to increase participation of excluded and marginalized women and men access entitlements on food security, natural resources, disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response?
3. How the RLSFS project has assisted to foster participation of excluded and marginalized women and men and their community organizations in policy dialogue with duty bearers on reforms & formulation of pro poor policies/laws related to food security, natural resources?

Access to livelihood and food security rights of excluded and marginalized communities

4. How and to what extent the RLSFS project has contributed to excluded and marginalized communities in forming and strengthening CBOs and built organizational capacity to dialogue with and influence duty bearers and CSO networks?
5. How the RLSFS project has supported to increase legitimate representation and active engagement of excluded and marginalized communities including women by 50% of the targeted rights holders in relevant local decision-making bodies?

Sustainable and replicable farm/non-farm climate resilient livelihood models to enhance food security

6. How and to what extent the RLSFS project has contributed to excluded and marginalized communities using and promoting climate resilient livelihood models reducing the food insecure periods from 150 to 50 days (Models' strength: low cost, replicable, easy to manage, innovative)?
7. How RLSFS project has fostered to local authorities acknowledge and promote climate resilient livelihood models in their development projects?

Organisational capacity to empower excluded and marginalised communities

8. How and to what extent the RLSFS project has contributed to ASB and partners in documenting accountable and transparent governance (management systems, human resource development, policies, and strategies)?
9. How RLSFS project has helped to partners in developing long term advocacy strategies on project related issues?
10. How and to what extent the RLSFS project has assisted to improve the synergy with other projects in the region?

Questionnaire Related to Humanitarian Response

Key evaluation question

1. How and to what extent the HR project has contributed to reducing the vulnerability and suffering of the people in crises through relief assistance in a timely manner and live in dignity?

Specific evaluation questions

Food security

2. How and to what extent the HR project has contributed to securing the food through FI and NFI support, cash-based intervention (conditional and unconditional), WASH support, etc?

Livelihoods restoration

3. How the HR project helped in reducing the suffering and further deteriorating of the lives and livelihoods of the community in distress?

Improve social amenities

4. How and to what extent the HR project has restored the damaged infrastructure for safe mobility?
5. To what extent the HR project increased the disaster resilience of local communities, schools and relevant stakeholders through the development and implementation of community and school based DRR approaches.

Institutional building

6. How and to what extent the HR project has contributed to strengthening the DRR based institutions (, task force) through participating in community-led activities?

Annex 3: List of people interviewed during the Final Evaluation for the RLSFS project in Telafar and Duhok governorates (as part of KIIs).

N.	Name	Position	Organization	Contact No.
1.	Mr. Maher Ali	Director of DoA Zummar	Department of Agriculture	7518605981
2.	Mr. Mohammed Salih Ubid	Agricultural Trainer, previous Director of DoA Zummar	Retired from DoA, independent.	7512440314
3.	Abdul Majeed Ahmed	Director of MoWR Ninewa	Ministry of Water Resources	7510277034
4.	Engineer Jassim Al-Zikr	Lead engineer for Al Jazeera Irrigation Project.	Ministry of Water Resources	7512306984
5.	Nashat Sadiq Mohammed	Mayor of Ayadiya	Ayadiya municipality	7503137844
6.	Younis Rasheed	Assistant of Mayor	Ayadiya municipality	
7.	Mansoor Jameel	Ayadiya market supervisor	Ayadiya municipality	7517571483
8.	Ahmed Al-Faris	Owner of the Kohorta market	Independent businessman	7508597871
9.	Ali Sumair Thaher	Supervisor of Kohorta market	Employed by the market owner	7502352676
10.	Mehsen Salih Ali	Mukhtar of Khermer	Community leader	7515411692
11.	Thaher Mahmoud Thaher	Mukhtar of Kohorta	Community leader	7502230974
12.	Noor Hazim Abdulkarim	Child protection (Local Leader)	DRC NGO	7512118017
13.	Shiren Salih Mahmoud	Child protection (Local Leader)	DRC NGO	7510018223
14.	Hanaa Abed Ali	Nurse and Midwife trainer (Local Leader)	CARE NGO	7518096355

15.	Jazeya Hussein Ibrahim	School Principal (Local Leader)	Governmental employee	751184159
16.	Jazaeyr Mohammed Khuder	Researcher (Local Leader)	IMC NGO	7503460318
17.	Jassim Hassen Mohammed	Mukhtar of Almuthalat (Local Leader)	Community leader	7503186101
18.	Faathi Hussein Salah	Mukhtar of Al Jazeera (Local Leader)	Community leader	7511801258
19.	Khairy Ahmed Ibrahim	Imam of Tel Mous mosque (Local Leader)	Religious leader	7507965104
20.	Ahmad Noori Salman	Mukhtar of Gerjal (Local Leader)	Community leader	7511435322
21.	Khalil Younis Khalaf	Director of hospital (Local Leader)	Governmental employee	7518654001
22.	Randala Nouredine	Country Representative	Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Iraq	7508621375
23.	Karina Pavlova-Meyer	Livelihoods Program Manager	Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Iraq	7729615887
24.	Nawzad Saed	Program Manager	Harikar NGO	7518086885
25.	Shamal Mohammed Sharif	Food Security and Livelihoods Project Manager	Harikar NGO	7507080804