

Iraq Country Factsheet



October 2022

The Integrated Border Management in the Silk Routes Countries (IBM Silk Routes) project aims to support the countries of the Silk Routes region, including Iraq, in building more effective and efficient border management systems, using as a blueprint the Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept and its developments, reflecting its principles and main components and translating them to the specific situations and realities of partner Silk Routes countries.

- The **specific objectives** are:
 1. Strengthened capacities and instruments to develop and implement IBM.
 2. Improved international coordination and cooperation in the area of border management.
- **Duration:** 1 January 2019 – 31 December 2024

The IBM Silk Routes project supports the Government of Iraq in developing strategic and operational capacity to manage national borders.

Enhancing inter-agency cooperation through application of the principles of Integrated Border Management

Development of National IBM Strategy and Action Plan

Current status: **three national inter-agency committees have been established** for the development and implementation of a National IBM Strategy and a **consolidated draft of the IBM Strategy is ready** for a submission to the new government. Together with the national stakeholders, so far the project has achieved the following outcomes:

- Conducted and validated an Integrated Border Management Gaps and Needs Assessment in 2019;
- Conducted a broad IBM awareness raising campaign;
- Supported and facilitated the development of the National IBM Strategy and Action Plan via:
 - Establishment of the inter-agency working group comprising of high-level officials from twelve national institutions;
 - Organising eight national workshops and field visits for the development of the IBM Strategy;
 - Providing required technical expertise and organising specialised technical assistance missions;
 - Coordinating with the security sector reform (SSR) and migration management national and international stakeholders and donor community;

IBM Strategy participating agencies:

- **Prime Minister's Office**
- **National Security Advisory (NSA)**
- **General Secretariat of Council of Ministers**
- **Ministry of Interior (MOI)**
- **Border Port Commission (BPC)**
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)**
- **General Customs Commission (GCC)**
- **Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA)**
- **Ministry of Planning (MOP)**
- **Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS)**
- **Ministry of Health**
- **Ministry of Transport**

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- As of January 2022, the project focused on the technical and administrative support to the work of three national IBM committees established and led by the National Security Advisory, including **the Leadership and Standardisation Team (the decision-making level)**, **the High-level Technical group** (equivalent of the Inter-agency working group whose establishment was initiated by the project in January 2021) and the **Sub-technical group** led by the Head of the Directorate General for Planning and Follow-up of the Ministry of Interior with the purpose of providing any technical expertise and assistance to other higher-level committees.

Next steps: implementation of the initial actions within the IBM Action Plan through conducting a multi-dimensional study on supporting the implementation of the National IBM Strategy. The study will include the identification of IBM stakeholders' interfaces and common areas of interest and responsibilities; assessment of control procedures at the border crossing points (BCPs); review on existing national legislation; comparative study with international IBM community and drafting a combined document on the way forward, priorities, next steps, benchmarks, and timeframes to support implementation of Iraqi National IBM strategy.

Strengthening operational capacity

Catalogue of recommendations

- The catalogue with basic recommendations for development of border crossing points in Iraq was prepared in spring 2022 and provides an indication on how modern border management should operate, and which basic criteria should be fulfilled in terms of strategic planning and development, institutional framework, staff and training, inter-agency and cross-border cooperation, etc.

Customs Risk Management

- The project supports the efforts of the General Customs Commission (GCC) in the development of their capacities in the area of customs risk management. Following the consultations and technical assistance, in May 2022 the project organised a series of customs risk management workshops with the Deputy Director General and 10 heads of business units from across the GCC. The focus of the awareness raising was on the presentation of the changing operating environment; ways how the GCC should deal with operational risk management and the role of ICT in the Customs Risk Management, in light of RM in ASYCUDA World.

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Next steps: This cooperation is planned to continue with advanced and specialised trainings for particular specialists within the GCC, as well as potential business process analysis for one pilot border crossing point.

Document Security and Identity Training Programme

- **7 Document Security training courses** were conducted for officials from the Ministry of Interior, Iraq National Intelligence Service, Iraq Civil Aviation Authority, Prime Minister Office and Border Ports Commission. Courses focused on the means to identify fraudulent documents and imposters via the technical characteristics of documents, and profiling of travellers against tactical and technical criteria to detect imposters. As a result of this programme to date:
 - 77 front line officials based at various BCPs passed **Basic level Document Security course**;
 - 23 of these officials progressed to complete an **Advanced level Document Security course**;
 - 14 of this group were selected for **Training of Trainers**, where technical document examination and profiling expertise was complemented with skills in pedagogy and presentation.

Next steps: The best performing trainers will be supported to deliver their own pilot trainings of the Basic Level Document Security course to their peers, with expert support, and relevant training materials and curricula provided.

Countering Cross-Border Crime Training Programme

- A training programme on countering cross-border crime was delivered in July 2021 to an inter-agency group of operational border officials from the Ministry of Interior, Iraq National Intelligence Service, Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority, Border Ports Commission and General Customs Commission. International experts, as well as experts from the EU Advisory Mission to Iraq delivered the training.
- Training topics included types and modus operandi of cross-border organised crime and terrorism, profiling techniques for the detection of potential perpetrators, and the latest trends in cyber criminality and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on criminal operations occurring across borders.

Trade Facilitation Training Programme

- A Trade Facilitation Basic level training programme ran in 2021 for the General Customs Commission, with two courses delivered to both junior ranked customs officers serving at Border Crossing Points and mid and senior management based in regional and headquarter directorates.
- The training focused on accession to, and implementation of, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, WCO Revised Kyoto Convention, and the WCO's SAFE Framework of Standards.

Next steps: The planned capacity building activities include specialised expert exchanges on operational topics; activities related to strengthening capacities of border authorities in countering cross-border crime; risk analysis and contingency planning awareness raising; as well as workshops aimed at the development of an inter-agency training plan/strategy.

Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

- As a rapid reaction to requests for assistance from the Ministry of Interior, Border Ports Commission and General Customs Commission, personal protective equipment (PPE) and durable equipment for preventing the spread of Covid-19 and protecting border officers during their duties was provided in 2020. The equipment included PPE such as masks, gloves, hand sanitisers, isolation tents, and infrared thermos cameras. Raw fabric materials were supplied to a MoI factory in Baghdad that was converted from uniform manufacture to produce COVID-19 related PPE. The quantity of raw materials provided was sufficient for the production



of one million masks. In addition, durable supplies were delivered to both MOI and BPC. These included pumps and thermal cameras.

Capacity and organisational development of training institutions

Training-of-Trainers Programme on profiling, interviewing and identification (8 phases)

- The 8-phase Training-of-Trainers Programme (ToT Programme) showcases not only efforts of the project directed towards the enhancement of operational skills and knowledge of the border authorities, but also addresses their educational and training systems.
- The ToT Programme for the officers from Ministry of Interior, Iraqi national Intelligence Service, General Customs Commission, Border Ports Commission and the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority commenced in January 2022 with the overall objective of enabling sustainable capacity of beneficiary institutions to deliver effective, impact-oriented, performance-based training. Whilst the Programme is still ongoing, it has thus far provided the 17 participating national trainers with the tools to conceive, organise and deliver training and capacity building in the field of IBM in a sustainable manner. It has introduced a new topic on profiling, which is not yet part of the national training curriculum, and developed a sustainability toolkit for the trainers, including a comprehensive Trainer's Manual on profiling, identification and interviewing at borders.

Next steps: The final activity is scheduled for 6-9 November 2022 where the national trainers will themselves deliver a 2-day training on profiling, identification and interviewing at the borders to their junior colleagues working as the front-line officers across the country. The training directorates of the participating institutions will ensure the integration of the profiling training into their training plans and provide an opportunity for the national trainers to further utilise their enhanced knowledge and skills.

Development of training institutions

- A HR and Training Gaps and Needs Assessment of the five Ministry of Interior training centres in Basrah, Koot, Sulaymaniyah, Najaf and Anbar, the Border Port Commission training centre, the General Commission for Customs Training Academy, and the Iraq Civil Aviation Authority was conducted in 2020/21.
- The findings, related to HR processes, training materials and methodology, trainer capacity, equipment and infrastructure and digital capabilities, were presented and endorsed by the relevant ministries in 2021.

National Project Steering Committee

A national project steering committee (NPSC) is held regularly to ensure the prominence of the Government of Iraq in the guiding the next steps of the project, to maximise ownership of project outcomes, and to allow for reporting and reflection on progress to date. Members of the NPSC are the Prime Minister Office, the Office of the National Security Advisory, General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, General Customs Commission, Border Port Commission, Ministry of Planning, Iraqi National Intelligence Service, Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority and the European Union Advisory Mission, Delegation of the European Union.

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