

This Newsletter presents highlights of the progress made under the **Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF)** through the three country work programs – Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon - and the regional work program. It also reports on budget. The period for this quarterly Newsletter is December 2022 through February 2023. Next issue will be circulated in June 2023.

الله أكبر



IRAQ

- A partnership was established between the WBG, Iraqi Private Banks League, COMSEC and the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, leading to the **launch of a microloan initiative for female entrepreneurs** to be funded by commercial banks and financial institutions. To improve women's access to finance, conditions for women will be eased by accepting capacity gained in financial management training under the MGF, in lieu of other types of collateral or guarantees.
- To strengthen the **capacities on policy level gender mainstreaming with a focus on economic empowerment**, Heads of women departments in 12 governorates, the MOP Women Empowerment Directorate in Federal Iraq and the High Council for Women and Development in KRI, participated in a three-day workshop. The training covered using a gender-lens to develop, implement and evaluate strategic policy documents. The **draft National Poverty Reduction Strategy III** was used to apply the approach, resulting in important inputs for an added pillar on women's economic empowerment.
- A three-day technical workshop on **tools to collect, manage and visualize gender data** built the capacity of stakeholders from Federal Iraq and KRI's MOLSA, Women Empowerment Departments, Central Statistics Organization and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, particularly related to childcare indicators.



JORDAN

- To **advance the high-level dialogue on economic opportunities for women**, a ministerial meeting was held during the visit of WB Vice President for MENA and Country Director. Progress, challenges, policies and programs were discussed, focusing on the need to address issues related to childcare, transportation, entrepreneurship, and social norms.
- To support **women owned businesses to expand their markets through exports**, 40 women business owners from various sectors participated in a capacity building workshop that presented early findings of an export readiness assessment and considerations for developing exports action plans. Further, to address the **needs of these SMEs looking to grow their business**, a networking event was held with representatives from government, civil society and private sector support programs.
- MGF work directly **informed the US\$400M Inclusive, Transparent and Climate Responsive Investment Program for Results** (additional financing), leading to the integration of gender related incentives for investment promotion, gender data & analytics, and women's entrepreneurship in the tourism sector.
- A series of **consultation and coordination meetings** were held with entities such as MoL, MOSD, NCF and SSC to inform the new MGF Jordan work plan (through Dec 2024), with a focus on developing a coherent childcare agenda.




LEBANON

- The **Leaders4Equality (L4E)** closing forum featured **Diversity and Inclusion HR tools** developed by the 10 cohort companies to support the retention, promotion and recruitment of women. Some firms have already changed internal policies, and learning exchanges are still occurring between companies. MGF certificates of completion were provided to 20 **Female Aspiring Leaders** who received capacity-building sessions. The forum was attended by around 50 participants from the Lebanese business community.
- The **Access2Markets Booster (A2MB)** concluded with a **matchmaking event connecting women entrepreneurs with suppliers and buyers** in foreign markets, economic attachés to Lebanon, experts in different value chains, especially in Agribusiness. The program was delivered to 50 women entrepreneurs and 23 Business Advisors.
- The three **campaign videos produced to shift social behaviors in support of women's economic empowerment** were successfully evaluated. Audiences believed that videos effectively presented women's barriers to work, and that solutions presented were realistic. The evaluation showed that videos were effective to impact attitudes towards working mothers, but that attention was retained for a longer time with the shorter version video. Final videos will be disseminated on social media and national television.

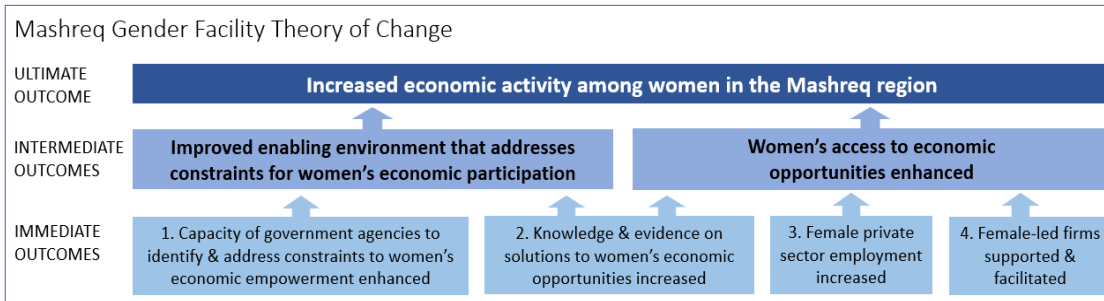


MGF Regional Work Program

SPOTLIGHT ON: DIALOGUE & PARTICIPATION

An independent evaluation of the Mashreq Gender Facility was finalized in February 2023. The main objective of the assessment was to provide learning and strategic guidance for the MGF during its mid-point cycle of the five-year program, covering the period from the start of the Facility in 2019 till June 2022. Comprising 49 interviews, the evaluation team engaged with different stakeholders representing government, private sector, and development partners across the three countries and at the regional level, as well as with World Bank and IFC staff internal and external to the MGF core team. It used innovative techniques, such as outcome harvesting, to hone in on different priority outcomes across the three countries. Results are encouraging and signal important MGF achievements to date, that demonstrate MGF’s role and influencing power in building country ownership of the gender equality and women’s economic empowerment agenda in the topic areas the Facility engages on. The evaluation reported that the MGF approach remains highly relevant to the priorities and needs of each country partner and is directly aligned with national agendas while supporting private and public linkages – a model for other World Bank-IFC initiatives. The evaluation noted that the MGF’s transparent and adaptable structure proved critical during COVID-19 and the multiple ongoing crises underway particularly in Lebanon (and Iraq). Nonetheless, there is always scope for improvement. Recommendations stressed the need for a stronger

focus on civil society, more emphasis on capturing results, better communications and staff care. The development of the next Phase (III) of country and regional workplans is directly informed by the findings of the evaluation.



MGF Budget Report

Reporting Period: June 1, 2019 – March 1, 2023

Received to Date

Donor	Amount Received
Canada	10,662,540.00
Norway	2,894,460.00
Total received	13,557,000.00

Committed to Date

Funds Allocation	Estimated amount
Iraq Work Plan	2,350,000.00
Jordan Work Plan	2,650,000.00
Lebanon Work Plan	2,500,000.00
Regional Work Plan	2,600,000.00
Total committed	10,100,000.00

Available Funds

Available balance	3,457,000.00
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Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,350,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 2,107,837.29
Available balance	\$ 242,162.71

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,650,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 2,255,459.36
Available balance	\$ 394,540.64

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,945,258.00
Available balance	\$ 554,742.00

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,600,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 2,327,089.02
Available balance	\$ 272,910.98

disbursements = actual expenditures & committed budget

The **Mashreq Gender Facility** (MGF) is a 5-year Facility (2019-2024) that provides technical assistance to **Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon** to enhance **women’s economic empowerment and opportunities** as a catalyst towards more inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful societies, where economic growth benefits all. Working with the private sector, civil society organizations and development partners, the MGF supports **government-led efforts, country level priorities** and **strategic regional activities** that: (i) Strengthen the enabling environment for women’s economic participation; and (ii) Improve women’s access to economic opportunities.

The MGF is a **World Bank - IFC initiative** in collaboration with the governments of **Canada** and **Norway**. It is mainly supported by the **Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality** that counts on generous contributions from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

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