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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

TF A3135

ON A

SMALL GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF USD 0.2 MILLION

TO THE

Republic of Iraq

FOR

SWIFT KRSO Kurdistan-Iraq (P158493)

June 2019

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Country Director: Saroj Jha

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BETF	Bank Executed Trust Fund
CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interview
CHS	Continuous Household Survey
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSO	Central Statistics Organization
FM	Financial Management
IDP	Internally Displaced Population
IHSES	Integrated Household and Socio-Economic Survey
IRRF	Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund
KRSO	Kurdistan Region Statistics Office
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
PDO	Project Development Objective
SWIFT	Survey of Well-Being via Instant and Frequent Tracking
TFSCB	Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building

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DATA SHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Product Information

Project ID	Project Name
P158493	SWIFT KRSO Kurdistan-Iraq
Country	Financing Instrument
Iraq	Investment Project Financing
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Not Required (C)	Not Required (C)

Organizations

Borrower	Implementing Agency
Iraq Ministry of Planning	Kurdistan Region Statistical Office

Project Development Objective (PDO)

Original PDO

The PDO of this grant is to support the Kurdistan region Statistics Office of the Government of Iraq in carrying out and analyzing a SWIFT for poverty monitoring in 2016.

Revised PDO

To support the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office of the Government of Iraq in collecting new information for welfare monitoring

FINANCING

	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
Donor Financing			
TF-A3135	200,000	156,285	156,285
Total	200,000	156,285	156,285
Total Project Cost	200,000	156,285	156,285

KEY DATES

Approval	Effectiveness	Original Closing	Actual Closing
03-Aug-2016	16-Dec-2016	31-Jul-2017	31-Jul-2018

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions
23-Jul-2017	0.04	Change in Project Development Objectives Change in Loan Closing Date(s) Change in Implementation Schedule

KEY RATINGS

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Substantial

RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	06-Jun-2017	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	0.00
02	11-Oct-2018	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.14



ADM STAFF

Role	At Approval	At ICR
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I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Context

A. Country Context

Iraq plunged into two simultaneous crises in the second half of 2014, one driven by the Islamic State insurgency and the other by a sharp decline in oil prices. Crude oil prices per barrel fell from around 112 USD in June 2014 to 97 USD in September and 62 USD by December 2014. Given Iraq's heavy dependence on oil as a share of GDP and exports, and a source of government revenues, this decline in prices alone would have hit Iraq's fragile economy hard.

In addition, since June 2014, Islamic State militants extended their influence from Syria into Iraq's northern and western provinces of Anbar, Nineveh, Salahadin, and to a lesser extent, Kirkuk and Diyala. A total of 354,000 families were internally displaced between June and December of 2014, representing about 2.1 million individuals and those left behind were cut off from the rest of the country. Civilian casualties in Iraq increased to close to 2007 levels because of the ongoing violence.

The bulk of the forced displacement of people took place in the five IS-affected governorates, with Anbar, Salahadin and Nineveh alone accounting for 90 percent of the displaced families. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) sought refuge across Iraq – 63 percent of IDPs crossed into other governorates, with about half of them going to the three governorates of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Both crises had significant adverse impacts on the economy and the welfare of Iraqis, through different channels. The prevailing insecurity disrupted oil exports from the north, adversely impacted trade and investment, led to the destruction of infrastructure, and impeded the flow of goods and services across the country, leading to a sharp contraction in oil and non-oil GDP (World Bank, Iraq Macro-Poverty Outlook, Spring 2015). The accompanying decline in public spending on social services and government transfers, and employment and earnings affected the welfare of Iraqis across the distribution. In addition, the population of the governorates directly affected by the Islamic State insurgency suffered substantial disruptions in their livelihoods and incomes as well as a loss of durable assets, not to mention the loss of life.

Results from an ex-ante assessment of the crises showed an almost complete erosion of the welfare gains of the past, with poverty falling back to 2007 levels and a 20% increase in the number of the poor. While the incidence of poverty was higher among Internally Displaced Population (IDP) than the rest of the population everywhere except in the Islamic State-affected governorates, IDPs made up only a small proportion of Iraq's 8 million poor in 2014. The rest comprised of households that already lived below the poverty line, or those who fell below the poverty line in the face of the massive economic disruptions the country is facing. The welfare impact of the crises varies widely across space, with the largest increases in headcount rates in Kurdistan and the IS-affected governorates. Yet, the poorest regions in the 2014 crisis scenario are the same as in 2012 – the currently IS-affected, and the South, with poverty rates of 40 % and 30% respectively.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

The recurrent and often violent crises in Iraq posed a severe challenge to monitoring poverty and welfare, precisely at times when it was most critical. The 2007 Iraq Household and Socio-Economic Survey (IHSES) was the first



comprehensive socio-economic survey in Iraq after a gap of nearly two decades. It was also the basis for the first estimates and analysis of poverty in line with international standards. The 2012 IHSES allowed for the analysis and estimation of poverty trends and a range of socio-economic indicators covering a period of relative peace and stability. These very large and comprehensive surveys were planned to be implemented roughly every five years, because of the costs of the survey in terms of budget but also in terms of logistical preparations and personnel.

To get more frequent poverty estimates in-between IHSES years, the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) fielded the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) in 2014. The CHS surveyed a sub-sample of IHSES clusters or PSUs, and contained a subset of IHSES modules. In particular, key modules for the construction of a comparable welfare aggregate were identical to the IHSES – the household roster, education modules, modules on labor market outcomes, food and nonfood consumption expenditures, consumption and expenditures on rations or PDS items, and incomes from earnings and public and private transfers. Fieldwork began in November 2013 and was supposed to run for 12 months. The intended sample of 13,834 households was drawn to be representative at the governorate level.

Fieldwork and data collection for the 2014 CHS were disrupted in May 2014 due to the deteriorating security situation in some areas and the growing influence of Islamic State (IS) militants in the northwest of the country. As a result, in five governorates, fieldwork could not be completed as planned – Nineveh, Anbar, Salahadin, Kirkuk and Baghdad. In Baghdad the last quarter was severely affected in terms of response rates, and no household in rural Baghdad could be interviewed. In the remaining 13 governorates, fieldwork continued as planned.

As a result, national level estimates of poverty using the CHS 2014 could not be estimated. The World Bank supported the Iraqi and Kurdistan region statistical offices in estimating poverty estimates for the 13 governorates where fieldwork was completed. The results suggested that Iraq had made remarkable progress towards poverty reduction in the first half of the year, with poverty headcount rates falling 5 percentage points relative to the first half of 2012. These welfare gains were eroded by the end of the year as suggested by micro-simulation estimates.

The crises did not appear to be short-lived. The ongoing security and budget crisis implied that large household surveys were not feasible in the near future. The next IHSES planned for 2017 was unlikely to take place on time. At the same time, it was more important than ever to monitor poverty and key socio-economic indicators, given the scale of the crises, and the high concentration of the population close to the poverty line.

Theory of Change

Activities: The following activities were undertaken under the project: sample selection, household listing, questionnaire development, development of the CAPI program, and survey fieldwork. Due to lack of a more up-to-date sampling frame, the 2009 census of dwellings was used as the sampling frame. After primary sampling units (PSUs) were selected, household listing operation was carried out in the selected PSUs to update the household count. A short questionnaire was developed to capture core non-monetary indicators of wellbeing and a module was developed to collect food expenditure using recall method. The questionnaires were developed after multiple rounds of consultation with technical staff from CSO and KRSO. In parallel, a CAPI program was developed for the non-monetary sections of the questionnaire. The fieldwork in the non-Kurdistan region of Iraq was conducted between October 2017 and January 2018. In Kurdistan, the survey was implemented in July and August of 2018.



Outputs: These activities led to the successful completion of the household survey and the production of the data. Out of 8640 sampled households, 8615 households were successfully interviewed, with a nonresponse rate of 0.3 percent. A subset of 1,500 households also responded to the detailed questions on household expenditure. The sample was representative at the governorate level for the non-monetary sections and at the regional level for household expenditure.

Outcomes: Close collaboration with the project teams helped the project achieved its intended outcomes. First, the capacity of CSO and KRSO to design and implement a lightweight survey to gauge the welfare trend was enhanced through multiple workshops to design the survey questionnaire and develop the CAPI program. A workshop on poverty measurement methodology was organized to boost the capacity of the statistical agencies in constructing the welfare aggregate and generating poverty statistics.

Second, provisional national and regional poverty rates were estimated using the information on household expenditure. In addition, survey-to-survey imputation methodology was used to estimate governorate-specific poverty rates. The data was used to produced a poverty note highlighting the most salient trends on monetary and multidimensional poverty, labor market outcomes, educational attainment, and housing conditions, among other outcomes.

Third, the survey has been used to inform multiple policies and programs of the World Bank and the government. One of the first uses of the data was to revise the proxy means test (PMT) formula used in targeting poor households for the national cash transfer program. The data has also provided critical analytical inputs to corporate priorities like Country Partnership Framework (CPF), Mashreq Displacement Strategy, and Mashreq Gender Facility.

Impact: The ultimate objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of the statistical agencies of Iraq to monitor the welfare of the Iraqi population using lightweight surveys during periods when comprehensive household surveys are infeasible.

C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes

The proposed activities are consistent with the pillars of the World Bank Group’s regional strategy for Middle East and North Africa. The first pillar – Renewing the Social Contract – seeks “to generate a new development model that is built on greater citizen trust; more effective protection of the poor and vulnerable; inclusive and accountable service delivery; and a stronger private sector that can create jobs and opportunities for MENA’s youth.” The data provides strong empirical foundation for the design of effective social protection program as it gives an updated picture of the spatial distribution of poverty, the profile of the poor, and it allows the development of proxies of household welfare to target cash transfer and other social assistance programs.

The third pillar aims to promote the welfare of refugees, IDPs, and host communities by focusing on building trusts and assets. The survey was designed to be representative of internally displaced persons and refugees in Iraq and disaggregated statistics by displacement status will provide the evidence necessary to monitor the progress on this front.



The project is also aligned with high-level national strategies like the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018 – 2022, Iraq Vision 2030, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, and Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework in that it provides the interim data to monitor progress toward the goals.

Project Development Objectives (PDOs)

The original PDO was “to support the Central Statistics Office of the Government of Iraq in carrying out and analyzing a SWIFT for poverty monitoring in 2016.” The PDO was revised in July 2017, broadening the scope of activity from poverty monitoring to welfare monitoring and removing the reference to the year 2016 to accommodate the initial administrative delays in survey implementation. The revised objective of the project was “to support the Central Statistics Office of the Government of Iraq in collecting new information for welfare monitoring.”

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

The key expected outcomes of the project were as following:

- Strengthened capacity of CSO and KRSO to collect and analyze household survey data
- Availability of interim poverty estimates and other socioeconomic indicators
- Use of the data to inform the World Bank’s and the government’s policies and programs

Components

The only component of the project was the implementation of the survey for welfare monitoring.

II. OUTCOME

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of CSO and KRSO to collect and analyze household survey data

The questionnaire was developed jointly with the statistical offices of Baghdad and Kurdistan over the course of multiple workshops and consultations. The discussions on the questionnaire began in December 2016, followed by a workshop in April 2017 in Erbil. The questionnaire was designed to measure key socioeconomic outcomes, including school enrollment, labor market outcomes, food security, dwelling conditions, asset ownership, and subjective wellbeing. Following the pre-test of the questionnaire, follow-up discussions were held in August 2017 with key counterparts from Ministry of Planning, CSO, and KRSO to finalize the instrument.

Outcome 2: Availability of interim poverty estimates and other socioeconomic indicators

The project generated intermediate estimate of poverty for the year 2017-18. The next poverty number is not expected until the second half of 2020, when the next round of IHSES survey is completed. As such, this exercise was successful in filling the gap in the poverty rate and between two large comprehensive household surveys.

The metadata and the unit record data have been made publicly available through the World Bank’s Microdata Catalog. This exercise entailed anonymization and preparation of public use files of surveys based on internationally accepted practices with the help of World Bank DEC team. After IHSES I and II, this is the third household



income/expenditure survey from Iraq that is made publicly available through the platform. The data will be a public resource that academics, external researchers, and other teams in the Bank can draw from.

Outcome 3: Use of the data to inform the World Bank's and the government's policies and programs

Soon after the completion of the survey, the data served as a valuable input to inform several of the World Bank's analytical outputs and strategies. It formed the basis of a poverty note that reported the interim poverty rate for Iraq and analyzed the trends in several other socioeconomic indicators. The analysis was completed just in time to inform the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) that was undergoing revision. The data is also well-suited to supply analytical inputs to the regional displacement strategy currently under development as the survey collected displacement status of households.

Importantly, the data was used to update the poverty targeting formula used to target poor households for Iraq's cash transfer program. The old formula was developed using IHSES 2012, and the need for a new formula that reflected the new conditions was increasingly felt. The consumption data collected in the 2017-18 survey made it possible to develop new proxies of poverty for targeting purposes.

Overall Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

Although the project was completed with a delay, it achieved its objective of generating interim estimates of poverty and other socioeconomic indicators and enhancing the capacity of the statistical agencies to conduct light and short surveys.

Other Outcomes and Impacts

Several lessons from the survey will inform the design and implementation of the next comprehensive household survey. For example, the use of pencil and paper questionnaire for some parts of the survey and CAPI for other parts will be adopted for the next IHSES as well because the format worked well in the short survey. Modules on migration and displacement in IHSES III will be strengthened to better understand the pattern and dynamics of voluntary and involuntary movement. A pilot is also planned to collect household consumption by recall to facilitate a move from diary-based to recall-based method of data collection.

Implementation of the survey further strengthened the World Bank's relationship with the statistical agencies of Iraq. The continued relationship and enhanced trust help mobilize additional resources from the TFSCB for technical assistance to IHSES III and from the Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) to pilot data innovations. This puts the team in a strong position to continue providing the necessary support to the statistical agencies of Iraq in collecting timely and high-quality data to inform policy-making.



III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

KRSO and the Project Management Team had limited experience in managing Trust Funds through the World Bank, so they faced some challenge on the administrative front related to setting up the designated account, obtaining authorized signatures, and preparing a procurement plan following Bank's guidelines. As a result, there was a delay at every stage of the project: between the AIS sign-off for the related P-code and the date of the Grant Agreement, between the Grant Agreement and opening of the Designated Account, and between account activation and the time of first Withdrawal Application.

At the time of survey design, nine districts (out of a total of 118) in the non-Kurdistan region were deemed too insecure so they were explicitly dropped from the sampling frame. During survey implementation, an additional five districts were thought to be too unsafe for field visits. The Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) from those districts were replaced by other PSUs within the same governorate.

The fact that CSO completed the survey before KRSO did proved to be advantageous because the Stata code to construct the consumption aggregate could be developed on the first set of data. This meant once the Kurdistan interviews were completed and the quality of the data was checked, consumption aggregate could be constructed for the whole sample within a short time. It was decided that a new poverty line would not be constructed using this data because the sample size for expenditure data was too small, the survey omitted the most insecure parts of the country, and the survey did not capture seasonal variation in consumption because it was not implemented over 12 months. Instead, the 2012 poverty line would be updated using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) series for Iraq between 2012 and 2017. This meant the poverty rate could be estimated soon after the survey was completed because of the availability of the consumption aggregate and the poverty line.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

The original deadline of the project was July 2017. Due to the initial delays in project implementation, the project was restructured on July 2017 to:

- Extend the Loan Closing Date be a year to July 2018
- Change the Implementation Schedule
- Change the Project Development Objective

The World Bank provided fiduciary and procurement support through the FM and procurement specialists in Iraq Country Office. In the initial phase of the project, the FM support was provided through a country-based consultant. He was responsible for supporting all the projects in the Iraq portfolio, which meant his time was spread thin across projects, which in turn implied the project management team received limited fiduciary training and support. There was a significant increase in the level of support with the addition of an FM specialist in the Country Office.

Overall, the project complied with financial management and procurement guidelines of the World Bank. At the time of its closing, \$156,285.49 of the total grant amount of \$200,000 had been disbursed, for a disbursement rate of 78 percent.

There was an issue with mis-procurement in Kurdistan. The first PPR report of the project's activities completed



till February 15, 2018 disclosed some shortcomings. In the first submission of the documents, purchasing of the tablets, as evidenced from the SOE, was done and paid for on July 19, 2017, while the quotations were dated August 22, 2017. In a second submission of documents, the purchase was made on August 24, 2017, and the registry record is dated the same day. The record also shows no purchase order issued for the said tablets. The issue was resolved when KRSO launched an internal investigation of the issue and took the following corrective steps:

1. Instructed the purchase committee to avoid getting invoices like the one on 19/7/2018 even if it meant a delay in project implementation.
2. Another person was assigned to be in charge of the financial matters.
3. The WB team will be consulted in all major decisions in relation to the project.

Some inconsistencies were also found in the statement of expenditure. Specifically, some KRSO staff were compensated through the project for activities they would have carried out regularly as a KRSO staff. The issue was resolved when the ineligible expenditure was reimbursed to the World Bank.

V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Management Team (PMT) must be provided dedicated training and orientation on World Bank financial management and procurement procedures. Otherwise, the PMTs will have difficulty complying with the Bank requirements. Lack of client capacity was one of the contributing factors to mis-procurement in Kurdistan.

World Bank rules must be clearly communicated and consistently applied. For example, during the period of project implementation, the rule that one must travel more than 150 kilometers from the home station to be eligible for per diem was instituted. However, this policy was applied retroactively, which led to a lot of confusion for the clients. The issue was eventually resolved after it was decided that the rule would only be applied to travels occurring after the rule was formulated.

Grants from TFSCB are not accompanied by supervision budget. In principle, the resources for supervision and management of the project must be provided by the CMU. In practice, however, the Bank Budget allocated by the CMU for the poverty program does not include supervision budget which makes monitoring and supervision of TFSCB projects difficult. Provision of supervision budget should be considered for at least fragile and conflict affected countries.

It is also important to simplify the procedures to implement small grants. Requiring small grants to follow the same fiduciary and procurement guidelines as IPF operations means the fixed costs embedded in processing the grant and supervising and monitoring the activities is exorbitantly high. A possible way to simplify the implementation of small RETFs is to make them a component of larger IPF projects in the country's portfolio.

Some characteristics unique to Iraq made it more challenging to provide adequate support to the counterparts. Limited capacity in the country office for visiting missions meant the team could not go on missions too frequently. Due to insecurity, the mission's movement within the country was severely limited, which precluded the possibility of meeting frequently with the project management team and making field visits.

Despite the delays, the surveys were eventually completed by both the agencies because of remarkable agility



and flexibility in survey implementation. For example, the survey in Kurdistan was implemented in mid-2018 to avoid overlap with the MICS survey which was implemented in the first half of 2018.

The capacity of KRSO for sampling, questionnaire development, and data collection and management is high, and the agency has sufficient capacity for basic data analysis like producing tabulation reports. However, the agency's capacity to develop consumption aggregate and perform more advanced data analysis is limited. A weeklong training on poverty measurement was provided to the technical staff from KRSO in June 2016, but more training is necessary to increase their proficiency.



ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

A. RESULTS INDICATORS

A.1 PDO Indicators

Objective/Outcome: Strengthened capacity of CSO and KRSO to collect and analyze household survey data

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Poverty Monitoring	Number	0.00 02-Feb-2016	1.00 31-Jul-2017	1.00 31-Jul-2018	1.00 31-Jul-2018
Methodology Note	Yes/No	N 02-Feb-2016	N 31-Jul-2017	Y 31-Jul-2018	N 31-Jul-2018

Comments (achievements against targets): The survey was not completed until July 2018, and the note required the availability of complete data, so it was not possible to produce the note by the project closing date. The note was completed in December 2018.

A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators

Component: Implementation of the Survey for the Welfare Monitoring



Unlinked Indicators

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Database	Yes/No	N 30-Jun-2016	Y 31-Jul-2017	Y 31-Jul-2018	Y 31-Jul-2018

Comments (achievements against targets):



A. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PDO

Objective/Outcome 1 To support the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office of the Government of Iraq in collecting new information for welfare monitoring.	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strengthened capacity of CSO and KRSO to collect and analyze household survey data2. Availability of interim poverty estimates and other socioeconomic indicators3. Use of the data to inform the World Bank's and the government's policies and programs
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Successful completion of the welfare monitoring survey2. Publication of a poverty note3. Dissemination of the data for public use through an online microdata library
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Design of the long and short questionnaire to capture monetary and non-monetary dimensions of welfare2. Programming of the short questionnaire in CSPro3. Sampling and household listing exercise4. Field implementation of survey and data quality control5. Poverty measurement workshop to enhance the capacity of the statistical agencies6. Publication of a poverty note with an update of interim poverty rate7. Archiving of metadata on World Bank's Microdata Catalog



ANNEX 2. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT

Components	Amount at Approval (US\$M)	Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)	Percentage of Approval (US\$M)
Support the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) in preparing for and implementing a SWIFT survey for poverty monitoring in 2016	0	.20	0
Total	0.00	0.20	0.00



The World Bank

SWIFT KRSO Kurdistan-Iraq (P158493)

ANNEX 3. RECIPIENT, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS