USAID | IRAQ
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EVALUATION

USAID/IRAQ FORAS PROJECT FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

August 25, 2015

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared on behalf of The QED Group, LLC under the Advancing Performance Management project, Contract No. AID-267-C-13-00001.

Advancing Performance Management

Contract Number: AID-267-C-13-00001

USAID/IRAQ FORAS FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALAUTION REPORT

August 25, 2015

Submitted by:

The QED Group, LLC
1250 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005, USA

Tel: +1.202.521.1900
Fax: +1.202.521.1901
www.qedgroupllc.com

Baghdad Office:
Victor 2 Compound
Quarter Al Qadisiyah, Section No 604
Street No 57, House No 3 (QED Villa)

Tel: +964.780.956.6996

Cover photo: Foras project staff assist internally displaced persons to find employment (Erbil, Iraq)
COVER PHOTO CREDIT: SHARAN HAJI / FORAS PROJECT

ACRONYMS

AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
COO	Center of Opportunity
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
FAF	Foreign Assistance Framework
FHH	Female-headed households
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
Foras	Iraq Opportunities Project
GOI	Government of Iraq
ID	Identification
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IMC	International Medical Corps
IMFN	Iraqi Microfinance Network
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IR	Intermediate Result
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IT	Information Technology
JPA	Job placement agency
KII	Key informant interviews
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LOP	Life-of-Project
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa

MFIs	Microfinance institutions
MIS	Management Information Systems
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheets
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PMTS	Performance Management Task Schedule
PSO	Private Sector Orientation
RF	Results Framework
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SMS	Short message service
SOW	Scope of Work
TA	Technical assistance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The USAID/Iraq Opportunities Project (Foras) is a two and a half year activity (February 7, 2013-November 6, 2015) with a budget of $47,153,771. Foras is funded by the USAID/Iraq/Office of Governance and Economic Opportunities and implemented under Agreement No. AID-267-LA-13-00001 by Family Health International 360 (FHI 360).

Foras is a demand driven workforce development project that works with the private sector to generate jobs in order to reduce under- and unemployment in Iraq's most vulnerable population segments. Foras was designed to accomplish this through a job portal and mobile applications intended to match job seekers with employment opportunities. To assist in filling these open employment positions, USAID/Foras planned to focus on improving the employability of Iraq's labor force through skills training and education. Foras also included sub-activities meant to provide entrepreneurs with the learning tools and resources necessary to grow and expand their businesses, with the intent that this would lead to expanded employment prospects.

Foras employs a dual-customer approach to meet its development objective of "Employment opportunities for private sector growth created." On the demand side, the project ensures that employers at the national and local levels have better access to skilled employees. On the supply side, Foras works with local service providers to provide accelerated skills training.

This report is for an independent end-of-project performance evaluation of the USAID/Iraq-funded Foras Project. . The design for the evaluation was submitted in March 2015, and data collection and analysis were conducted in April and May 2015. The evaluation data collection was concluded on May 18, 2015; at that time Foras had begun its closeout activities. This evaluation was funded solely by USAID/Iraq, and the budget for the evaluation was $392,456.

Methodology

The evaluation was based on a non-experimental evaluation design that employed a mixed range of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to address the evaluation questions. The evaluation conceptual framework allowed for triangulation of data from multiple sources in order to ensure data validity. Quantitative data from a beneficiary survey instrument were enriched and contextualized by qualitative information from key informant interviews and focus group discussions with open-ended questions that probed for the story behind the numbers. Special emphasis on women, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other vulnerable groups was included in the evaluation design.

The evaluation team included a core team of three expatriates: a workforce development specialist, an entrepreneurship specialist, and a monitoring and evaluation specialist (who served as Team Leader), as well as a local Iraqi evaluation specialist. The evaluation team also included three female and seven male data collectors, who worked in teams, each focused on one of the Foras project's geographic catchment areas. The evaluation team was supported by The QED Group LLC's (QED) staff. Interview subject categories included key informants; job placement agency staff; trainers and training of trainers providers; and employers.

The evaluation included a thorough review of key program documents, including FHI 360's cooperative agreement and modifications, annual work plans, Performance Management Plan

(PMP), QED/ Advancing Performance Management (APM) Project's data quality assessment, Foras' quarterly reports, dashboard data from Foras' web portal, and numerous reports, surveys, training curricula and other documents provided by program staff. All FHI 360 staffers as well as their partners were cooperative and very helpful with timely responses to all requests by the evaluation team.

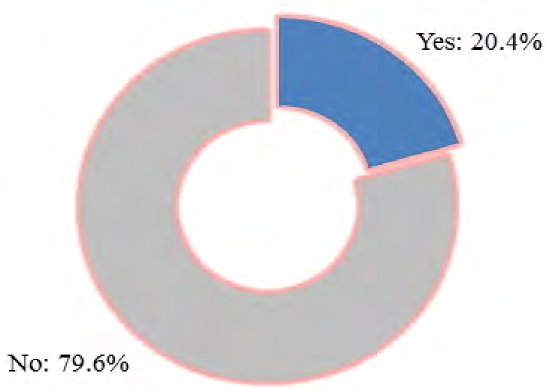
Key limitations included Iraq's security environment that prevented access to some areas, especially for the expatriate evaluators, and also reduced the number of focus groups that could be convened out of concern for the beneficiaries to be interviewed. The evaluation team addressed this limitation by adding a number of individual beneficiaries to the sample in order to augment the focus group discussions and fully capture the beneficiary voice in the findings.

The evaluation team also had limited access to IDPs because of security conditions and limited authorized access to the camps. However, nine IDP focus group discussions were conducted in the camps where entry was permitted.

Evaluation Question Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations
Question 1: To what extent was Foras' technology and information driven approach effective in achieving project goals given the target population?

Findings:
- Foras' approach was largely driven by output indicator targets – attaining a large number of job seekers (175,000) and business partners (3,000 JPAs and employers) on the portal.
- Foras placed greater emphasis on registration of beneficiaries and use of the portal than on developing employability and specialized (vocational) skills.
- The web-based portal primarily benefits (and is primarily accessed by) job seekers with higher skill and educational levels; 476 out of 608 or 78 percent of beneficiaries surveyed have completed technical college or university-level education.
- Trainers from universities in the Kurdistan Region noted that the Foras mobile phone application is a good entry point for their students, who frequently use phone applications.
- The Foras dashboard indicates that over 20 percent of portal visitors first heard about the Foras services through a Facebook post.

Did Portal Visitors Connect through Facebook Link?



Conclusions:
As a technology-driven innovation, the Foras portal was initially designed for job seekers with higher skill and education levels and benefited this group more; other target groups such as youth and vulnerable populations benefited more from the mobile applications.

Foras has been successful in its rapid implementation of the job portal, use of social media to promote program activities and disseminate job announcements, and providing training and orientation that enables job seekers to use the portal. However, the portal has some quality control and design issues including the lack of search capabilities for sub-specialties or specific job locations and lack of a system to verify whether job postings are genuine.

Recommendations:
Management of the portal should be transitioned to a for-profit entity with experience in the operation of job sites, with continued USAID funding and support during a transition period.

During the transition phase, Foras, through its call center operations, should provide both monitoring and support roles. During such a period, Foras should 1) continue its efforts in assisting job seekers completing their CVs; 2) more thoroughly document employability and employment outcomes; and 3) provide referral services for accredited workforce learning opportunities.

Question 1.i: To what extent have employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras?

Findings:
- Foras is partnered with 17 currently operating job placement agencies (JPA). Approximately 12 appear to be suitable without further Foras inputs.
- Within the exception of a small number of JPAs that received Foras sub-contracts for training activities, none have had any organizational training. Most reported no training beyond an introduction to the portal employer job-posting site.
- Foras promoted a professionalized system of JPAs. Prior to Foras, with a handful of notable exceptions, labor intermediaries had a bad reputation and were widely known for unscrupulous business practices, often taking money in advance without providing services.
- A small number of JPAs had well-defined processes that include screening job seekers, CV preparation, interview preparation, and skills assessment. These more professionalized JPAs indicated a relatively higher rate of success in placing candidates than those with less well-defined processes.
- JPAs in more metropolitan areas adopted more of the Foras technologies and recruitment approaches than JPAs in less metropolitan areas.
- Foras developed and disseminated promotional materials on the JPAs.

Conclusions:
Foras has successfully introduced the idea of a professionalized labor intermediary corps through its support for JPAs. The uptake of the Foras technologically-based approach varies among individual JPAs and among regions, with more metropolitan areas adopting more of the technologies and recruitment approaches. All but two of the 17 JPAs visited were either still in nascent stages of development or were initiated as additional activities under the Foras project by

existing local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These JPAs require more training and more support than they received in order to be professionalized and sustainable organizations. Nevertheless, Foras has played an important role in publicizing and marketing JPAs as a key part of its system-building activities.

Recommendations:
Targeted training should be provided to JPAs based on a thorough assessment of their capacity and effectiveness to provide services with attention to any differences in workforce needs among different catchment areas. Training should cover general management topics including: how to run a JPA; best practices in coaching job seekers on interview skills and identifying realistic markets for their skills; using technology for screening and skills matching between jobs and job seekers; and strategies for marketing and outreach for both job seeker and employer clients.

Question 1.ii: How effective was project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops?

Findings:
- Most Foras training is focused on establishing a Foras account and basic uses of the portal.
- According to the Foras dashboard, more than 80 percent of portal registrants have logged on to the system fewer than five times.
- The Foras dashboard counts approximately 175,000 registrants. Of these, 2,912 (1.7 percent) have viewed e-learning training materials at least one time, and only 173 (0.1 percent) have completed one or more courses.
- Foras has focused most of its efforts on promoting registration on the portal, with minimal follow up with beneficiaries beyond this first step. A recent exception is a short-term (~2 weeks) initiative to assist registrants with completing CVs.
- The capacity and skill level of their instructors was adequate, and many trainees reported positive employability results from the training. However, Foras training of any type (online, workshops, specialized training) led to a job offer for 19 out of 269 beneficiaries who completed the evaluation online survey and had participated in Foras training.

Conclusions:
Training and skill building were seen by interviewed job seekers as one of the most positive and important elements of Foras. Job seekers' ability to benefit from online resources is dependent on their ability to access them. The vast majority of Foras participants did not access e-learning offerings and, in general, the types of trainings and the means of accessing them were not sufficiently well-matched with job seekers' needs and ability to access the online resources.

Recommendations:
Foras should do more in terms of periodic follow-up with individual beneficiaries who have participated in training to assess what additional support is needed to facilitate increased employment-readiness. More emphasis should be placed on quality follow up with individuals and less emphasis in pursuit of large outreach (portal registration) targets.

Particularly in contexts where Internet access is limited by bandwidth or cost, it is important that online trainings be offered in formats (both in terms of language and bandwidth) that facilitate access by job seekers. In addition, emphasis should be placed on opportunities for Foras trainees to develop basic keyboard skills, site navigation, and use of e-learning functions.

It would be valuable to have Arabic-language e-learning materials and USAID/Iraq, together with partners in Egypt and other Middle East countries, should support the development of such materials that could be used throughout the region. This initiative could be led by relevant USAID bureaus including the Bureau for the Middle East, the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3), and the U.S. Global Development Lab.

Question 2: How effective was Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of IDPs with regard to daily and short term jobs?

Findings:

- Foras staff reported a shift in strategy from assisting IDPs to attain daily/short-term jobs to assisting them with finding entrepreneurial opportunities and longer-term job placement.
- Foras provided training to 3,860 IDPs through a partner in Erbil. Training areas included specialized vocational and job placement skills.
- IDP job seekers were not provided any systematic assistance after participation in training; Foras did not track job acquisition or entrepreneurial activities for IDP beneficiaries.
- IDP focus group participants indicated that they gained the confidence to leave the camps and other temporary housing to look for work.

Conclusions:

Foras' ad hoc approach, although it included many key elements necessary to achieve employability, did not target individual IDP beneficiaries in a systematic way, and as a result brings them only "part way there" to reaching employability.

Recommendations:

Foras should adopt a system that tracks individuals through their learning stages toward employability. This will lead to a more complete package of competencies among individual beneficiaries receiving more intensive services of longer duration. More intensive tracking of beneficiaries may result in fewer numbers being reported overall, but those beneficiaries who receive more specialized skills training will be better prepared for employment, and larger employment numbers would be achieved. Tools such as beneficiary surveys and outcome mapping can be used to document and measure intangible, though critical, changes in beneficiary attitudes and behaviors that represent intangible program achievements.

Question 3: How effective and consistent was Foras' application of a strategy for reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and job acquisition?

Findings:

- Foras was successful in establishing and meeting targets that resulted in high participation numbers for women in training and other job acquisition and entrepreneurship activities. However, the program design did not identify a specific strategy in its approach to program design that addresses gender gaps.
- The program did not tailor its entrepreneurship training to reflect the diversity of beneficiaries and their businesses and did not include any follow up in the form of mentoring or activities to support women entrepreneurs in finding access to finance.

Conclusions:
Despite the success of achieving large numbers of women beneficiaries in Foras' activities, systemic limitations reduced the impact that such a workforce development and entrepreneurship focused program could have achieved in reducing gender gaps. Lack of access to finance is an additional barrier to Foras entrepreneurship training participants who wish to start a business or grow their existing businesses, and this was not addressed by Foras.

Recommendations:
While it is not realistic to expect Foras to address systemic gender gaps in society, Foras can affect women's employment by working closely with JPAs and employers on the demand side, and individual women job seekers on the supply side, to improve the prospects of individual job seekers and increase the supply of skilled women available for employment.

Foras should follow up with entrepreneurship training participants and provide referrals or access to successful mentors who understand the entrepreneur's business realities. In addition, access to finance should be facilitated through partnerships with microfinance institutions such as USAID's former partners in the Tijara Provincial Economic Growth Program (Tijara), or by facilitating partnerships with banks.

Question 4: How could Foras' PMP have been designed to better monitor implementation progress?

Findings:
- The project documents do not articulate a coherent underlying hypothesis or theory of change.
- The PMP did not include a provision for outcome indicators of job seekers that track employability as an intermediate achievement toward finding a job.
- There is no systematic tracking of individual training participants through their stages of employability, job acquisition, or business establishment.

Conclusions:
The program design is based on an implied linear logic model with the Foras portal as the central component. The underlying assumption, expressed explicitly in key informant interviews (KII) by Foras staff, is that introducing large numbers of beneficiaries to the portal through basic training and registration will result in increased employment. Based on these KIIs, the implicit assumption is that the successful implementation of the portal would in itself provide much of what is needed to connect job seekers to employers. However, Foras has not used valid, reliable, or accurate means to collect data on job outcomes.

Recommendations:
A monitoring and evaluation plan should be developed around a well-articulated underlying change theory. Indicators that measure employment should be based on verified job placements. Performance indicators should provide information that would allow program management to focus on and address gaps that constrain employability of job seekers as well as the availability of skilled workers for employers. Where output indicators are chosen, they should be designed to measure progress toward closing employability gaps.

Lessons Learned

- Although the Foras program was developed to support private sector development, the model is not closely aligned with market incentives that, if built into the program, would improve service delivery for job seekers and employers and provide the means for the program to become sustainable. Without any fee structures involved, there are no incentives for improved screening of job candidates or follow through with individual job seekers to connect them with employers.
- The Foras technologies that have been developed have significant market value, and current numbers of job seekers and job postings have reached a "critical mass" such that the system (portal) is attractive to the private sector and should be privatized in accordance with USAID's Development Objective (DO) to support private sector development.
- Foras' call center is an important and valuable resource for job seekers, JPAs and employers, as well as a resource for program monitoring through beneficiary surveys. Call center services should be expanded to monitor and track individual beneficiaries in order to ensure that their needs are met as they work to develop employability-related competencies.
- JPAs are an essential component of the Foras system. These private sector profit-motive business partners have strong incentives to serve both job seekers and employers seeking qualified workers. Additional support should be provided to the JPAs to do their own outreach and marketing with employers as well as to work directly with job seekers.
- Professionalizing JPAs should be a core focus of continued Foras-type programming, including further capacity building, assisting them to pre-screen applicants to ensure they meet minimal qualifications, and training in marketing through social media and other means to expand their employer client base. JPAs should become one-stop career centers, partially subsidized for training costs, but essentially businesses with market incentives to improve the quality and efficiency of Foras-portal based job placements for all stakeholders.

Table of Contents

Figures and Tables

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Iraq Opportunities (Foras) Project (Agreement No. AID-267-LA-13-00001) is a thirty-three month, $47,153,771, demand driven workforce development project designed to work with the private sector to generate jobs, and thus reduce under- and unemployment in Iraq's most vulnerable population segments. Foras ("Opportunities" in Arabic), which is funded by the USAID/Iraq Office of Governance and Economic Opportunities and implemented under a cooperative agreement by Family Health International 360 (FHI 360), has a period of performance from February 7, 2013, to November 6, 2015.

This report is for an independent end-of-project performance evaluation of the USAID/Iraq-funded Foras Project. The evaluation was designed in March 2015, and data collection and analysis were conducted from April to May 2015, six months before the end of the project's period of performance. This evaluation was funded solely by USAID/Iraq through the Advancing Performance Management (APM) Project implemented by The QED Group, LLC (QED), and the budget for the evaluation is $392,456.

A. Evaluation Purpose

This is a final performance evaluation of the USAID/Foras Project, which is ending on November 6, 2015. The purposes of this evaluation are to:
1. Assess whether expected project results were achieved through its activities.
2. Substantiate the pros and cons of extending project activities beyond the current completion date of August 2015 both in time and funding.
3. Determine the extent to which the performance management plan (PMP) has captured valid data and measured progress towards achieving project objectives and specifically under Intermediate Results (IR) 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

The results of this evaluation will inform USAID on the applicability of replication to other workforce development projects in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and possibly other regions as well.
The evaluation report addresses the following evaluation questions:
1. To what extent was Foras' technology and information driven approach effective in achieving project goals given the target population?
    i. To what extent have employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras?
    ii. How effective was project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops?
2. How effective was Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) with regard to daily and short term jobs?
3. How effective and consistent was Foras' application of a strategy for reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and job acquisition?
4. How could Foras' PMP have been designed to better monitor implementation progress?

B. Audience

The audience for the evaluation will be mainly the USAID/Iraq Mission and its Office of Governance and Economic Opportunities. Results will also be shared with the USAID/Washington Middle East Bureau, and they are expected to be useful to other donors working in the workforce arena.

C. Evaluation Team

The evaluation team consisted of 20 people. The evaluation team was led by core group of three international and one Iraqi expert who directed 10 Iraqi data collectors. APM staff supported the evaluation.

The core team included the following key evaluation personnel:

- **Mr. Joseph Kotun** – Team Leader / Evaluation Expert: Mr. Joseph Kotun has more than 20 years of professional experience in international development, with a special focus on evaluations, monitoring, microfinance, microenterprise, and entrepreneurship. He has conducted performance and impact evaluations as well as data quality assessments, institutional assessments, value chain analyses, and field studies for USAID in the MENA, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, and Asia regions. His evaluation experience includes quantitative and qualitative methods, household questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory evaluation methods. He is experienced in recruiting, training, and supervising local field research teams in developing countries. Mr. Kotun holds a Master of Arts degree from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. He is a native English speaker and is proficient in French.

- **Dr. Michael Midling** – Dr. Michael Midling is a highly experienced international development professional with particular expertise in workforce development, economic development, and evaluations in fragile states. Dr. Midling has managed and led complex and large-scale global, regional and national evaluations, and he managed external consultants in the conduct of surveys for mid-term and final evaluations in conflict zones. As Senior Program Officer for Evaluation for the International Labor Organization's Program on the Elimination of Child Labor, Dr. Midling developed a series of guidelines and other training materials to enhance evaluations of the impact and sustainability of interventions related to the education of children rescued or withdrawn from child labor. He led a team of 50 researchers, survey specialists, and video documentarians in a cross-sectoral mixed-methods retrospective performance evaluation of USAID/Uganda's $750 million assistance portfolio during the post-conflict period of the Lord's Resistance Army war. In Nicaragua, he evaluated an integrated program for at-risk children and youth designed to provide opportunities for formal and non-formal education, life skills, and workforce competencies. Dr. Midling has a Ph.D. from Stanford University in International Educational Administration and Policy Analysis. He is a native speaker of English, fluent in Spanish and French, and proficient in Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Portuguese. He holds Top Secret security clearance.

- **Mr. Charles Vokral** – Mr. Charles Vokral is a seasoned small and medium enterprises (SME), finance, and bank management specialist with 20 years of experience with economic governance and private enterprise development. He worked for six years in Iraq, including as an economic governance advisor and as an economist with the USAID/Iraq's Cities Stabilization Project. He also worked in Egypt for over 10 years, including serving as Chief of Party of the USAID/Egypt funded SME Program with the National Bank for Development and the final Privatization Project, where his emphasis was on sustainable institution building. He also served as private sector – SME finance adviser for USAID in Egypt, managing $84 million in funds. He has extensive experience with privatization and capital market development, commercial and merchant bank management restructuring, and competitiveness including cluster analysis and supply chain development. Mr. Vokral holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Western Illinois University. He is a native English speaker with a basic understanding of Arabic. He holds Secret Clearance.

- **Mr. Mohammed Talal** – Mr. Mohammed Talal is an international development expert with wide experience in monitoring and evaluation techniques. He is an experienced trainer in the fields of capacity building and in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). He has conducted numerous assessments and evaluations. He holds a degree in Civil/Structural Engineering from the University of Technology in Baghdad. He is fluent in Arabic and English.

Ten Iraqi data collectors carried out in-person and phone interviews and facilitated the focus group discussions under the guidance and supervision of the core team. These data collectors received initial and follow-up training from the core evaluation team and assisted in the triangulation and analysis of the data that was collected.

QED's in-house APM team facilitated and coordinated logistics and communications with implementing partner staff and Foras stakeholders. The in-house team also served as additional local advisors.

II. BACKGROUND

A. CONTEXT AND PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS

Unemployment, underemployment and a lack of lower and middle class economic opportunity threatens Iraqi security and stability over the medium term. Depending upon the source consulted, estimates for national unemployment rates in Iraq range between 15-20 percent. Underemployment further exacerbates this problem. The problem of under and unemployment in Iraq is directly tied to the country's over-reliance upon public sector employment and a disconnect between the needs of the employer and the capabilities of the labor force. The low rate of new market entrants, illiteracy, and socio-cultural restrictions further impede the efficiency of the labor market by restricting the mobility of labor and the degree to which women participate in the labor market.

Since Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) seized territory in June 2014, women are increasingly the first victims in this conflict and the last to be rehabilitated. The United Nations

Population Fund warned that about 250,000 Iraqi women and girls, including nearly 60,000 pregnant women, were in need of urgent care. With ISIL controlling roughly one-third of Iraq at the time this evaluation was designed, the numbers are estimated to be much higher.

As mentioned in the evaluation Statement of Work (Annex 1), Iraq's National Development Plan 2013-2017 is based on nine fundamental assumptions that are considered the methodological foundation for preparing the plan; two of the most relevant of these are:

- Job-creating economic growth is the guiding principle of investment in order to respond to unemployment and poverty according to the principle of sustainable justice. A continued emphasis on empowerment as the basis of developing human capital is needed. Effective empowerment guarantees consolidation of the principles of a knowledge economy that strengthens the role of women and youth in development.
- The traditional nature of the Iraqi labor market is a reflection of the political, economic and social situation in Iraq. This has made Iraq a market that is not keeping pace with international developments and that does not respond to the growing size of the Iraqi labor force. Unemployment rates among young graduates in the 15-29 age brackets reached 24.2 percent in the year 2011, number indicative of the absence of an effective employment policy and the weak role of the private sector.

One of the plan's economic goals is to raise worker productivity and increase economic activity in order to increase competitiveness and diversification in the economy and to allow the private sector to play an active role in investment and protected jobs creation.

One of the plan's social goals is to build the capacities of women and youth in terms of knowledge, skills, and health. This would support their increased participation in Iraq's labor market. The evaluation team was aware of no other donors providing support similar to the Foras project.

B. THEORY OF CHANGE/DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

Foras employs a dual-customer approach to meet its development objective of "Employment opportunities for private sector growth created." On the demand side, the project ensures that employers at the national and local level have better access to skilled employees. On the supply side, Foras works with local service providers to provide accelerated skills training. Foras' aim is to enable the conditions to create jobs, thus contributing to Development Objective (DO) 2 "Create conditions for private sector growth" of the 2013-2015 USAID/Iraq Mission PMP.

C. INTENDED RESULTS

Foras is a demand driven workforce development project that facilities job placement by creating a more efficient market. It does this by promoting access to jobs and employment/employability training in order to reduce under- and unemployment in Iraq's most vulnerable population segments. Foras is expected to directly contribute to Intermediate Result (IR) 2.2: "Employment opportunities for private sector development created."

USAID/Foras activities are designed to lead to the outcome of two Sub-IRs:
2.2.1 Support to labor markets to meet employer needs increased;
2.2.2 Private sector strengthened through targeted trainings and opportunities (including initiatives for vulnerable populations).

Indicators to measure the success of the project are identified in the Foras activity PMP and are also the indicators used by the Mission to measure progress toward IR 2.2 and Sub-IR 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Foras Indicator Summary[1]

Result #	Result	Indicator #	Indicator
Development Objective 2	Employment opportunities for private sector development created.	Indicator DO 2.a	Average number of permanent full-time workers in *Foras* Partner Businesses of Small-Medium Enterprise profile (SME) in Iraq.
		Indicator DO 2.b	Proportion of permanent full-time workers that are female in *Foras* Partner Businesses of Small-Medium Enterprise profile (SME) in Iraq.
IR 2.2	Improved supply and demand for labor in the private sector.	Indicator IR 2.2.a	# of partner businesses reporting higher percentage of available positions filled.
		Indicator IR 2.2.b	Number of persons receiving new employment or better employment (including better self-employment) as a result of participation in *Foras*-funded workforce development program (F Indicator).
Sub-IR 2.2.1	Support to labor markets to meet employer needs increased.	Indicator S-IR 2.2.1.b	# of job seekers registered through *Foras* program assistance.
		Indicator S-IR 2.2.1c.	% of partner businesses who report improvement in qualifications of applicants resulting in job placements.
Sub-IR 2.2.2	Strengthened private sector through *Foras* targeted training and opportunities for Iraqis including initiatives vulnerable populations.	Indicator S-IR 2.2.2.a	# of job seekers receiving *Foras* targeted training to bridge skills gap to meet business partner needs;
		Indicator S-IR 2.2.2.b	Proportion of female participants in *Foras*-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (F Indicator).

[1] QED, "Iraq Opportunities Project: USAID/Foras: Annual Work Plan/Program Implementation Plan - Year 3," December 31, 2014, p. 21.

Foras' ability to achieve its intended results depends upon several factors outside of the project control. For instance, both job seekers and job placement agencies/employers must provide accurate information when using the electronic recruitment tools. Job seekers must make full use of the complete array of Foras project activities to improve their skills to become more employable. Further, the security conditions in Iraq must allow for project activities to continue and essential management personnel to remain in country.

D. Foras Components

A variety of activities organized under four components contribute to the goal "Employment opportunities for private sector development."

Foras has four components: 1) Technology-enabled, information-driven workforce development; 2) Industry level information; 3) Youth entrepreneurship; and 4) Long-term viability of the microfinance sector.

Component 1: Technology-enabled, information-driven workforce development: According to the Foras contract, under Component 1, Foras planned to

- Identify and assess local catchment areas and survey local employers to determine current demand for hiring skilled employees;
- Collaborate with local training providers to develop outcome-oriented training programs to close the skill gaps;
- Build the capacity of local training partners to be responsive to market needs;
- Support training institutes to deliver skills training to job seekers;
- Link trainees, job seekers, and employers through a labor market information exchange; and
- Place trainees in temporary internships or jobs.

Component 2: Industry Level Information: According to the contract for Foras, "…industry level information will be used to close the skill gaps in key sectors. Starting with those sectors in which the lack of appropriate labor skills serves to constrain growth, but including emerging sectors such as the IT industry, Foras will determine the gap between what is needed by larger employers and the capacity of education and training institutes to design and deliver courses to meet the demand for appropriate skilled workers. Foras will work with industry associations to define skill competencies and requirements. Project subcontract and grant funds will be used to improve the quality of employability training and to increase the placements of internships and longer-term apprenticeships for women, especially those from female-headed households, IDPs, and religious minorities."

Component 3: Youth entrepreneurship: According to the Foras contract, Foras was designed to work closely with the Ministry of Youth and Sports' entrepreneurship development program in each catchment area to assist them to become more market-led. Foras planned on working with the Ministry of Youth and Sports' 2012 IQD30 billion SME loan fund. In 2013, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs announced IQD23 billion women's SME loan fund. However, the Ministry of Finance pulled back funding for both activities due to budget constraints and oversight reasons.

Foras also planned to "broker financing for business expansions and some of the stronger start-up ideas through existing SME lenders[and] develop new financial products as well as explore ways to mitigate lender risk such as the way loans are structured, stronger financial oversight by loan officers, or perhaps with entrepreneurship start-up partial guarantees supplemented with GOI [Government of Iraq] funds. The project was also to explore the use of USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA) with commercial banks during the project period."

Component 4: Long-term Viability of Microfinance Sector: Component 4 was designed to focus on 1) Policy support and dialogue; 2) Self-regulation and reporting; and 3) Drawing on Government of Iraq (GOI) resources in support of microfinance and SME finance. Ultimately, however, this component was given a lower priority than other components.

A central focus of Foras is addressing workforce development in Iraq by using a job portal and mobile applications to match job applicants with prospective employers.

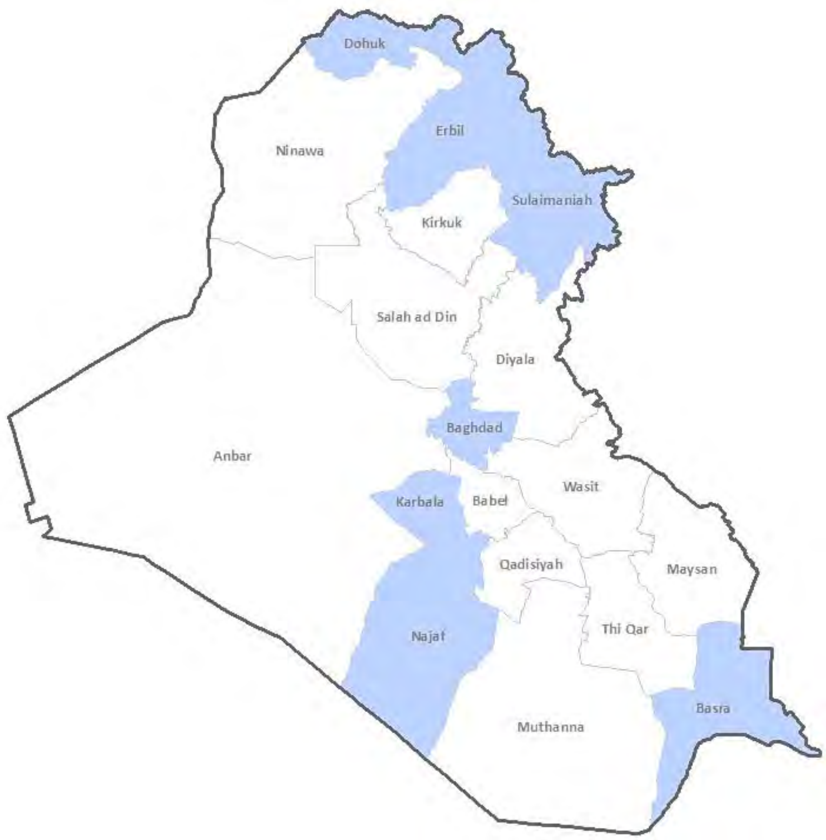
To assist in filling these open employment positions, Foras planned to focus on improving the employability of Iraq's labor force through skills training and education. For instance, under the training component, both instructor-led and online courses are focused on upgrading the capabilities of job seekers to match private sector job requirements; Foras expected this to enhance economic competitiveness. In an attempt to change attitudes towards working in the public sector, most of the training events were to include an awareness briefing on the private sector and the tangible rewards it offers.

Foras also included sub-activities meant to provide entrepreneurs with the learning tools and resources necessary to grow and expand their businesses, with the intention that this would lead to expanded employment prospects. The entrepreneurship training was designed to coach participants in developing business plans with the objective of enabling them to start and/or expand their businesses. Startup weekend and business plan competition activities were expected to open the door for participants to be active players in the local economy. A microfinance oversight component was added to the Foras project in August 2013 through modification #1 to the USAID agreement in order to facilitate USAID's transfer/disposition of loan fund microfinance grants provided by USAID's previous Tijara Provincial Economic Growth Program. These activities included a short-term technical assistance (STTA) expert and a field auditing team which conducted risk assessment and field audits to determine grant compliance.

While Foras has not been directly working with the GOI, its work with the Iraqi private sector and job seekers is meant to complement government efforts and directly support these objectives to improve the lives of the Iraqi people.

The target population for Foras is the full Iraqi workforce, with special emphasis on women, youth, IDPs, and other vulnerable populations. Foras operates in five catchment areas within Iraq: Baghdad, Erbil, Najaf, Karbala, and Basra. Suleimaniyah, Dahuk and communities bordering Erbil in the Kurdistan Region, which have a concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), were added through a September 2014 modification of the project agreement.

Figure 1: Provinces in which Foras was implemented (in blue)



Work with IDPs initially focused on assisting them to find daily and temporary jobs. Foras adjusted its focus to respond to the developing humanitarian crisis by attempting to increase usage of services like the online job portal and the matching platform of the short message service (SMS) short code (1025) in order to reach job seekers marginalized by the conflict. Targeted events "Women Work" and "Go to the Job" were the titles for the Private Sector Orientation (PSO) conducted through the life of the project in all five catchment areas in order to address gender-related employment issues. In addition, youth trainings were conducted in both public and private universities.

The Year Two Work Plan provides some budget figures for key program components including approximately $800,000 for Centers of Excellence, $750,000 for Relief International to conduct entrepreneurship activities with women and vulnerable peoples, $500,000 for a nationwide Business Plan Competition, $472,000 to begin a short message service (SMS) messaging and JobMatch Service using the MT2 platform (a leading MENA region service provider); an investment in a cost-sharing with Microsoft's Corporate Social Responsibility unit to development a job search/career development/entrepreneurship portal for Iraq, including over $200,000 development and translation costs; and $400,000 for job fairs. These activities leveraged $500,000 in grant funding to Silatech Foundation from Microsoft/CSR in order to develop the Foras job portal as well as provide funding to the primary implementer of the eLearning portal resources. Funding was also provided for the translation of 20 eLearning job skills courses into Arabic and 6 eLearning courses into Kurdish.

III. METHODOLOGY[2]

A. Evaluation Design

The evaluation was based in a non-experimental evaluation design that employed a mixed range of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to address the evaluation questions. The evaluation conceptual framework allowed for triangulation of data from multiple sources in order to ensure data validity. Quantitative data from a beneficiary survey instrument were enriched and contextualized by qualitative information from key informant interviews and focus group discussions with open-ended questions that probed for the story behind the numbers. Special emphasis on women, IDPs and other vulnerable groups was designed into the evaluation.

B. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation report addresses the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent was Foras' technology and information driven approach effective in achieving project goals given the target population?
    i. To what extent have employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras?
    ii. How effective was project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops?
2. How effective was Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of IDPs with regard to daily and short term jobs?
3. How effective and consistent was Foras' application of a strategy for reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and job acquisition?
4. How could Foras' PMP have been designed to better monitor implementation progress?

C. Data Collection

Data was collected through multiple methods. Some elements of data collection began while the expatriate members of the core evaluation were in the United States prior to departing for the field work in Iraq, and the bulk of the data collection was done during the team's time working together in Iraq from April 6, 2015, through May 19, 2015. Field work included data collection in four Foras catchment areas, including Baghdad, the Kurdistan Region (including Erbil, Dahuk, and Suleimaniyah), Basrah, and Najaf/Karbala.

1. Data Collector Training and Quality Control

Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by Iraqi data collectors with supervision and guidance from the core evaluation team and APM staff. The team of 10 Iraqi data collectors included seven men and three women. Before data collection was initiated, data collectors participated in two full days of training, including practice with the evaluation instruments. As part of this training process, data collectors gave feedback on the survey instruments.

---

[2] This report section is a summary of the evaluation methodology. Please see Annex 3: Supplement to Methodology for a more detailed description of the methodology used for this evaluation.

Where feasible, the data collectors worked in male/female pairs. They were assigned to work in regions they were familiar with: two teams worked in Baghdad; one team was assigned to each of the other focal regions Basra, Erbil/Dahuk/Suleimaniyah, and Najaf/Karbala.

After the first week of field work, data collectors returned to the QED office in Baghdad for a one-day follow-up training. During that time, they provided feedback on data quality. Adjustments were made to interview protocols as necessary, and the core evaluation team provided individualized support to data collectors. At the end of the data collection, each data collection team was intensively debriefed on their interviews by the core evaluation team and additional notes and information were solicited to ensure complete capture of interview findings.

2. Data Collection Methods and Respondents

Data collection was done through the methods described below. Table 2 contains a breakdown of the number of respondents by each survey instrument.

Quantitative Surveys: A survey of 569 Foras beneficiaries was administered electronically (online with Facebook and email announcements to beneficiaries), by phone, and in-person to collect quantitative data on use of the Foras web portal and mobile application from various stakeholders including job seekers, job training participants, and entrepreneurship training participants.

There were two types of semi-structured qualitative interviews: 1) qualitative interviews with key informants and other stakeholders selected ex ante and 2) qualitative interviews with selected beneficiaries who filled out the quantitative survey.

Key informant and stakeholder interviews: The evaluation team conducted a total of 95 semi-structured qualitative interviews with key informants and stakeholders. Respondents included JPAs, trainers/training center staff, employers, and other stakeholders (e.g., IDPs, women IDPs, women entrepreneurs, job seekers, women job seekers, training participants). The instruments were structured using a consistent set of open questions closely mapped to the evaluation questions along with sub-questions tailored for specific stakeholder types to probe for contextual and detailed information. The sample was designed to provide representation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Foras staff and other key partner staff were also interviewed. Of the semi-structured interviews, 20 were with respondents in Baghdad, 28 with respondents in Erbil, Dahuk or Suleimaniyah, 27 with respondents in Basra, and 21 with respondents in Najaf or Karbala.

Beneficiary qualitative interviews: Follow-up beneficiary qualitative interviews were conducted with selected quantitative survey respondents. The sample of respondents was selected based on purposeful sampling to illuminate aspects of the quantitative data that was collected. The sample included IDPs, business plan competition participants, job seekers who completed multi-day training, and others.

Focus group discussions: The evaluation team facilitated 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) to draw out information on common experiences, gain consensus, and understand differences of opinions and ideas. Of these, four FGDs were with exclusively women participants. The evaluation team conducted four FGDs with IDPs to elicit information on their context and experiences.

D. Data Collection Limitations

Security concerns were the underlying cause of most data collection limitations. In particular, the evaluation team was only able to facilitate 12 out of the 20 focus group discussions (FGDs) that were included in the original evaluation plan. Three FGDs were canceled because of safety concerns for participants due to recent violent events and explosions that precluded local travel. In addition, the evaluation team's access to IDP beneficiaries was more limited than originally anticipated because of security considerations and camp regulations that did not allow access by outsiders.

Security concerns also curtailed the ability of the expatriate evaluation team members to travel freely throughout most of Iraq outside the Erbil area. As a result, local data collectors were used for the majority of beneficiary interviews. While the majority of data collectors had previous field experience with QED or other employers, they were non-specialist contractors with varying skill levels and without formal training in evaluation methods and practices beyond that provided by QED. Higher level qualitative skills such as facilitating FGDs with open ended questions that require *in situ* flexibility and multi-tasking were particular challenges. The core evaluation team was able to effectively work with these limitations through three days of training in the early stages of field work, individual mentoring, and multiple debriefing and feedback sessions.

Table 2: Data Collection Methods and Respondents

	Semi-structured interviews					Focus Group Discussions			Beneficiary Individual Qualitative Interviews	Beneficiary Quantitative Surveys	
	Total	Trainers	Training Supervisors	JPAs	Employers	Total	Women FGDs	IDP FGDs		Total Beneficiaries	IDP Beneficiaries
Target Interviews	80	20	5	25	30	20	5	n/a	n/a	150	n/a
Total Completed	95	31	9	18	38	12	4	4	123	569	31
Baghdad	20	6	2	4	8	1	1				
Erbil/Dahuk/ Sulaymaniyah	28	15	4	3	6	9	3	4			
Basrah	27	4		4	19						
Najaf/Karbala	21	6	3	7	5	2					

E. Document Review

The evaluation team reviewed key documents provided by USAID/Iraq and the implementing partner. The document review focused on documents related to the Foras design, implementation and existing performance monitoring information.

F. Data Analysis

To facilitate both quality control and data analysis, data collectors uploaded interview notes daily from the field, which were reviewed by the core evaluation team. At the end of field work, each of the five pairs of data collectors spent one full day debriefing with the core team. During the debriefings, the groups focused on clarification of notes and identifying themes and findings. Then core team facilitated a one-day, guided roundtable discussion with all of the data collectors and other evaluation team members to review findings from their interviews with employers, trainers, JPAs, and beneficiaries.

As part of the analysis, the evaluation team triangulated data from the following sources:

- Quantitative data from the beneficiary survey implemented online;
- Structured follow-up qualitative interviews with selected quantitative survey respondents (e.g., IDPs, business plan competition participants, job seekers who completed multi-day training);
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with JPAs, trainers/training center staff, employers;
- Key informant interviews with Foras and key partner staff;
- Project background documents.

IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many successful outcomes to Foras' activities, including: successful implementation of the Foras portal and mobile technologies in a short period of time; successful outreach to job seekers for various training events and job fairs; outreach to women beneficiaries; and outreach to IDPs despite the challenges of incorporating them into a program that was not initially designed to address the unique needs of IDPs. There are also areas where outcomes were less than optimal. This section summarizes central findings from the evaluation research, outlines the main conclusions from those findings, and provides recommendations, both for other workforce programming in similar contexts and for changes that could be made should there be an extension of Foras.

A. Evaluation Question 1: Extent to which Foras' technology and information driven approach was effective in achieving project goals given the target population

1. Findings for Evaluation Question 1

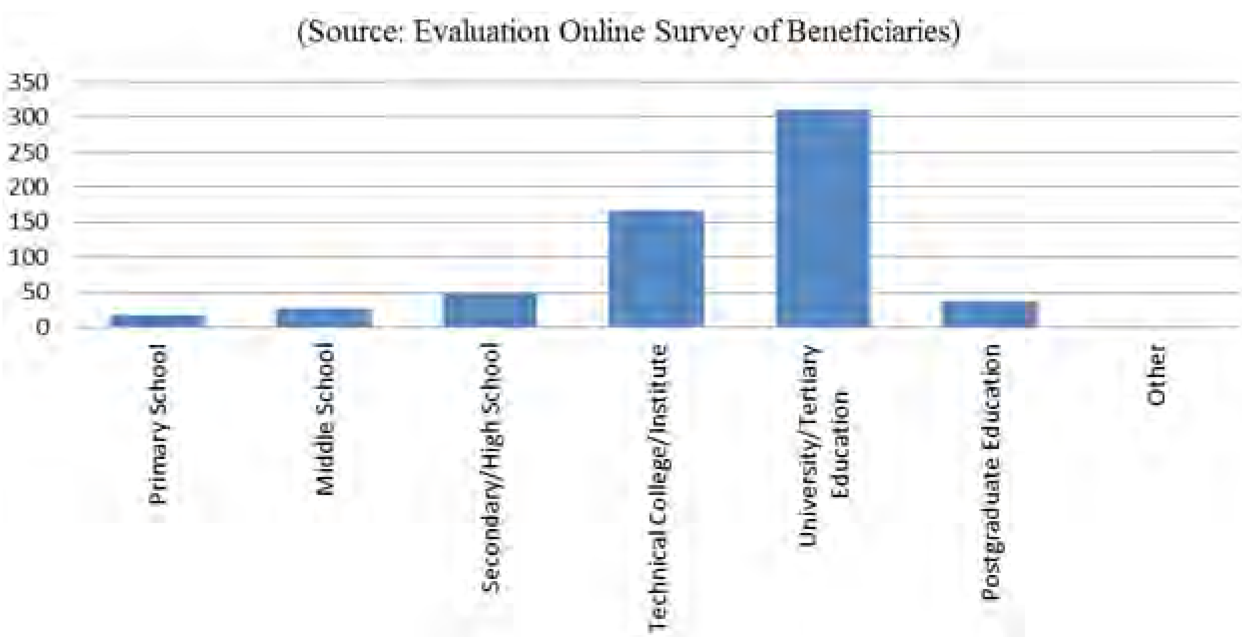
According to FHI 360's reports, by November 2014 Foras had achieved its high-level life of project goals of 48,000 job seekers registered, 24,000 job seekers trained, and 12,000 job seekers placed into jobs. As of June 13, 2015, Foras reports 177,000 registered job seekers, and 50,000 job seekers trained.

The Foras web-based data portal dashboard showed approximately 175,000 job seekers and 3,000 business partners (primarily employers) as registered on the portal, and Foras records showed nearly 50,000 persons (33 percent of whom were females) as having been trained in the use of the portal and basic job search techniques. These high numbers, which exceeded project targets, were primarily due to the fact that Foras placed a heavy emphasis on registration of beneficiaries and use of the portal. However, there appears to have been less emphasis on developing employability and specialized skills.[3] Not only has Foras focused most of its efforts on promoting registration on the portal, until very recently there has been minimal follow-up with beneficiaries beyond this first step. A recent exception, begun in spring 2015, was a short-term (approximately 2-week) initiative to assist registrants with completing CVs.

According to the project portal dashboard figures, fewer than 20 percent of all persons currently registered on the portal can be considered "active" in any real sense. The remaining more than 80 percent of portal registrants having logged on to the system fewer than five times.

Four hundred seventy-six out of the 608 or 78 percent of beneficiaries who completed the online survey conducted as part of this evaluation have completed technical college or university-level education.

Figure 2: Level of Education of Foras Beneficiaries



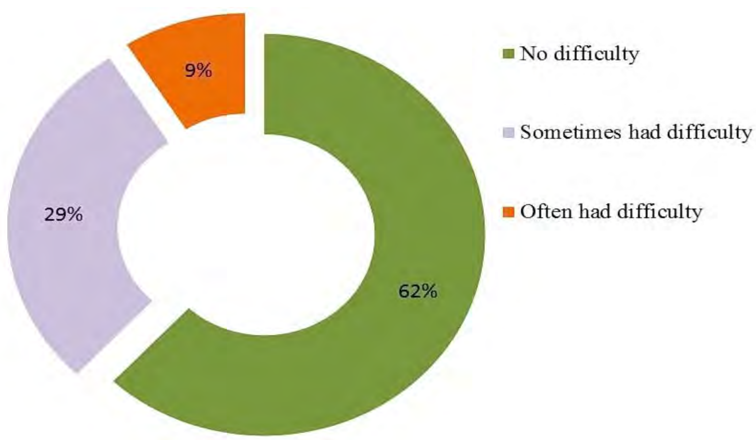
Through its work on the portal, Foras has made important strides in creating a technology-based system for job matching. However, 191 out of 431 or 44 percent of respondents of the evaluation beneficiary survey, as well as many of those interviewed in-person, indicated that they often or sometimes experienced difficulties using the portal or mobile applications. Job seekers and business respondents consistently indicated that the screening and filtering functionality of the

[3] According to Foras records, of the more than 2500 reported discrete training activities funded by the program, only approximately 150 of these activities were training sessions of more than one day. Source: Foras Sub-Activity Report-LOP 31-March-2015; spreadsheet.

portal is limited and that it was difficult for some groups of stakeholders to use the portal effectively as a job-matching tool. Some of the most frequent comments were that the portal had limited utility for searching by sub-specialties, particularly in engineering and science fields, and by geographic location or province. Job seeker respondents complained that many of the job postings were not current. In some cases, these respondents indicated a suspicion that some companies posted non-existent jobs as a way to get "free advertising" for their firms. Some employers also complained that they received many CVs from persons who did not have even the most rudimentary of qualifications for the advertised jobs.

Foras' beneficiaries also had the option to connect to the portal through a mobile device, referred to as the 1025 system for the SMS message number used for announcements and other communications. The 1025 system provided a valuable means for some IDPs and others with limited access to computers and/or the Internet to receive job announcements through Foras' Facebook page, receive activities announcements, upload their CV to the portal and apply for jobs. As might be expected, beneficiaries who relied primarily on mobile devices experienced some challenges. Of the 219 respondents to the beneficiary survey who reported that they connect to the portal most frequently through the 1025 system, 84 or 38 percent reported sometimes or often experiencing difficulty connecting to the portal. Of those 84, 29 or 34 percent reported frequent difficulties with navigation, and 45 percent reported experiencing frequent internet network problems that prevented connection through their mobile devices.

Figure 3: 1025 Mobile Users' Experience Connecting to Foras Portal



However, 62 percent of the beneficiary survey respondents reported no difficulty in connecting to the portal through their mobile devices. While the survey did not include questions regarding what the 1025 users actually did once they connected, in qualitative interviews these users mostly reported receiving job announcement messages, but searching the portal for job openings and sorting the results was more difficult, and yielded fewer search results compared with directly searching through a computer/Internet connection with the portal.

In addition to the 1025 system, Facebook is also a key technology that Foras uses for outreach and marketing to job seekers and employers. Foras' Facebook page, which they report to be followed by over 980,000 job seekers, is used to promote new open/active job postings as well as activities such as job fairs. Foras' Facebook page is more frequently accessed through use of the

1025 mobile technology than through computers based on metrics obtained from tracking of user profiles.

In focus groups with trainers at universities in the Kurdistan Region, when questioned about the usefulness of the Foras mobile application, trainers mentioned that it is a very good entry point for job seekers, especially students who are frequent users of mobile phone applications.

According to the Foras dashboard, over 20 percent of portal visitors first learned about the Foras services through a Facebook post.

The evaluation team confirmed through observation of the Foras call center and meetings with call center staff that the call center is actively engaged not only in help desk services but also in following up with beneficiaries who have incomplete applications.

Besides these technical issues related to job filtering and job-matching, another weakness of the system is that the project did not have a systematic or verifiable method of reporting job placements. Rather, the project reported jobs that have been de-listed from the portal as job placements (F Indicator). As we discuss below, this was an important flaw in the design of project monitoring, albeit one that Foras has recently (as of March-April 2015) tried to rectify. The evaluation team found that out of 569 job seekers who completed its survey, 403 respondents had registered on the Foras portal, and 97 had an interview. Of those, 42 received an offer of employment, and 19 accepted the offer.[4]

2. Conclusions for Evaluation Question 1

One of the major goals of the Foras project was to rapidly build a jobs portal and related SMS and social media tools. Foras was largely driven by output indicator targets that covered data such as number of persons registered on the portal. The project served several distinct target populations with varying skills and education levels. As a technology-driven innovation, the Foras portal was initially designed for job seekers with higher skill and education levels. The web-based portal benefited those with higher skills and educational levels more; other target groups such as youth and vulnerable populations benefited more from the mobile applications.

Specifically, Foras has been largely successful in the following areas:

- With support from partnering organizations, introducing and rapidly building out a jobs portal and related technological tools, such as SMS (which were more adapted to persons relying on mobile technologies), and social media (particularly Facebook) in advertising activities and jobs;
- Providing orientation and training sessions on the use of the job-search portal and related tools to high numbers of end-users, particularly job seekers;
- Providing a larger pool for employers to access to seek better-qualified workers to fit their needs;
- Providing a centralized jobs database for job seekers;

[4] An important caveat is that these results are likely skewed upwards because of nature of persons sampled; all respondents replied either initially to a Facebook announcement or subsequently to email requests. They were, therefore, among the more technologically sophisticated compared to the larger population of Foras portal registrants, and likely among the better-educated.

- Developing an effective and efficient call center operation.

The project has been less successful in other key areas:

- Follow-up with training participants, particularly on job placement;
- Quality control and portal design issues, including the lack of search capabilities for sub-specialities or specific job locations, and the lack of a system to verify whether job postings are genuine.

In response, Foras has reported conducting surveys to its employers/business partners in order to address the issue through indirect survey data.

3. Recommendations for Question 1

The portal and related technologies have been substantially developed and have an active user base that is likely to continue to grow. A central recommendation is to transition management of the portal to a third party entity with experience in the operation of job sites, with reasonable continued USAID funding and support during a transition period and, ideally, some return on the U.S. government's investment to date.[5] If a for-profit entity charged employers for job listings or offered fee-for-services for enhanced services to job seekers, many of the quality control issues discussed above may be better addressed. For example, employers could be charged for placing job posting announcements on the Foras portal; as a result there would be added incentive for quality and accuracy in the job descriptions, as well as prompt removal of postings once they are filled or no longer valid.

A second recommendation is to scale up call center operations and provide additional monitoring and support to larger numbers of job seekers through additional call and drop-in centers in areas beyond the current center in Erbil. Foras should 1) continue its efforts in assisting job seekers with completing their online CVs; 2) continue to more thoroughly document employability and employment outcomes; and 3) provide referral services for accredited workforce learning opportunities.

B. Question 1.i: Extent to which employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras

1. Findings for Question 1.i

Labor market intermediaries are an important component of workforce development systems and can make important contributions to the functioning of a modern, meritocratic, and professionalized workforce. Based on our interviews, many respondents credited Foras with

[5] An example of a precedent for such a transition comes from the U.S.: America's Job Bank was launched in 1995 by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to offer online search capabilities to help Americans find jobs. It introduced innovative functionalities like resume posting, interactive posting, and career-related content to help prepare job seekers to find a job. By 2000 it had become one of the largest employment sites in the U.S. The Department of Labor gradually slowed the program after its peak in 2004, and fully retired the Job Bank during the summer of 2007, transitioning it to a private sector operator. Through a separate site, the Career One Stop, USDOL provides links to training opportunities and career exploration. It also provides links to state-specific Employment Service listings at: http://www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/findjobs/state-job-banks.aspx

promoting a professionalized system of job placement agencies (JPA). Some respondents indicated that prior to Foras, with a handful of notable exceptions, labor intermediaries had a bad reputation and were widely known for unscrupulous business practices, often taking money in advance without providing services.

Foras partners with 17 currently operating JPA partners, the majority of which indicated that they intended to continue working on job placement activities after Foras ends. Of the 17 JPA partners, 12 indicated that Foras sent staff to work with them to set up their database and/or paid for JPA staff to do this work. Nine JPAs indicated that their organization continues to provide training on the portal for job seekers, but only four indicated that they "always" or "often" provide training on the portal to employers. Four of the 17 indicated that they do not use the portal on a regular basis. Out of the 17 JPAs, 12 received database support, including training on the portal for a three-month period, two received sub-contracts to conduct training activities, and the remaining three JPAs reported that their JPA had not received any training.

Most JPAs were founded as labor market intermediaries at the time that Foras began activities. The longest-established JPA that was interviewed (Manpower Erbil) had an institutional history of work as a JPA approaching ten years. Although nearly half (eight) of the JPAs indicated that they had some experience prior to Foras, most of those had only been very recently established by 2013, and the remaining nine were established after Foras began operations. Because the notion of a professionalized JPA is new in Iraq, several JPA respondents indicated that one of their most crucial needs was in organizational training for workforce development. As one example, a JPA operated by a foundation noted that they were doing the work of a JPA without knowing if they were doing it correctly and would have appreciated more training in best practices in the operation of a workforce center. Indeed, the evaluation team found that only a small number (three or four) of the JPAs had well-defined processes that include screening job seekers, CV preparation, interview preparation, and skills assessment. These more professionalized JPA respondents indicated a relatively higher rate of success in placing candidates than those with less well-defined processes.

Another factor influencing adoption of a technologically-driven approach had to do with geographic location. The JPAs in larger metropolitan areas and more economically advanced areas, such as Baghdad, Basra, and the Kurdistan Region, had adopted Foras technologies and recruitment methodologies. In contrast, JPAs that were interviewed in less metropolitan areas (e.g., Najaf), while they used the Foras portal, reported slower adoption of the technology due to smaller labor markets and traditional networks.

As part of Foras' marketing strategy to raise awareness of its services, it developed and disseminated promotional materials on the JPAs.

2. Conclusions for Question 1.i

Whether it was an intended consequence or not, Foras has successfully introduced the idea of a "professionalized" labor intermediary corps through its support for JPAs. The uptake of the Foras technologically-based approach varies among individual JPAs and among regions, with more urban and economically advanced areas adopting more of the approaches than less metropolitan areas. Beyond an introduction to use of the portal and support for database management for tracking, however, Foras provided little organizational support. The reason for this is unknown. However, in interview discussions, Foras staff described a general approach of building the technology resources with the expectation that its business partners would be proactive in seeking support from Foras. Nevertheless, Foras has played an important role in publicizing and marketing JPAs as a key part of its system-building activities.

3. Recommendations for Question 1.i

An activity supporting job placement agencies should provide targeted training to JPAs based on a thorough assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of JPAs to provide services that include attention to any differences in workforce needs among different catchment regions or areas. USAID or another donor should provide additional training to JPAs on general management topics including how to run a JPA; best practices in coaching job seekers on interviewing, and identifying realistic markets for their skills; how to best provide services to employers, including using technology for screening and skills matching between jobs and job seekers; and strategies for marketing and outreach to both job seeker and employer clients. Training should also include topics targeted to specific needs of individual JPAs (based on a simple diagnostic) and topics targeted to the major employment sectors in the JPA's areas of operations.

C. Evaluation Question 1.ii: Effectiveness of project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops

1. Findings for Question 1.ii

***General Findings*:**

As reported by the Foras Chief of Party, Foras' initial assessments among employers in each catchment area identified a need for low-level employability skills to fill entry-level positions, especially among large employers in the construction industry (the largest employment segment). Foras' initial hypothesis that Oil & Gas sector jobs, specifically welding positions, were needed proved to be false. Slow responses from Big Oil Companies (BOCs) and complications with government stakeholders, as well as Foras' short period of performance led to the decision to focus on PSO trainings in the first year, followed with online eLearning. Later, JPAs under the COO program delivered six diploma-level, skills training courses.

As indicated above, Foras' training for job seekers is focused on facilitating establishment of a Foras account and on basic use of the portal. The vast majority of training sessions (approximately 94 percent) were of one-day duration or less, with the large majority of those trainings consisting of 3-4 hour sessions covering a basic introduction to the use of the portal along with brief introductions to job searching, interviewing, and CV preparation.

Out of the 2,511 discrete training sessions conducted by Foras – not counting the 18 multi-day training of trainer (TOT) sessions – just 157 (or slightly over 6 percent) were multi-day training sessions. These multi-day sessions served 2,976 direct beneficiaries (1,187 women and 1,789 men), and they were well-received by the participants we interviewed. Of those multi-day sessions, 29 trainings were five-day entrepreneurial training sessions and four were three-day "startup weekends" for potential entrepreneurs. The remaining 124 were specialized skills training courses in four subject areas: 1) human resources and customer service; 2) basic security; 3) retail sales; and 4) hospitality. These longer courses typically lasted from two to four days. Based on reviews of curricula and training agenda, no delays were reported by trainers or beneficiaries who were interviewed.

Those respondents that did receive specialized training were generally positive regarding the quality and usefulness of training materials and indicated that the capacity and skill level of their instructors was adequate. Many trainees who were interviewed acknowledged positive employability results. However, out of 150 training participants represented in the beneficiary survey, only 19 or 13 percent reported that the training led to a job placement or improvement of their own economic status. Of this number, 10 respondents reported having accepted the offer.

***E-learning*:**
Based on data available at the time of the evaluation collection activities, of approximately 175,000 portal registrants, 2,912 (1.7 percent) have viewed e-learning training materials at least one time, and only 173 (0.1 percent) have completed one or more courses. There are various reasons for this – Foras did not develop its own materials; rather it chose to provide a link to a primarily English-language, European based e-learning website, Alison.com. There are a few exceptions, most notably materials that the project made available for a handful of specialized skills trainings in four sectors and which were also used for in-person training. However, FHI 360 reports recent online course enrollments have increased to 3,201. FHI 360 also reports other recent developments include Arabic and Kurdish translation of four diploma courses – Human Resources, Customer Service, Food Safety, and Tourism – which were launched onto the Portal on April 1, 2015. While there are many Arabic translated courses on Alison.com, the Kurdish courses became the first ever online courses to be offered in that language. Foras reports that, as of mid-June 2015, 369 learners were enrolled in these Arabic courses and 152 in the Kurdish courses.

Many respondents noted technical problems related to slow loading of some of the multimedia courses, which required faster Internet connections to function optimally. Moreover, those relatively few persons who did complete courses faced another hurdle when they tried to achieve certification. People who complete training series for certification need to pay for the certification, and there are few viable mechanisms (e.g., credit cards) available to them to make payment.

2. Conclusions for Question 1.ii
Training and skill building were seen by interviewed job seekers as one of the most positive and important elements of Foras. Workshop-based training, particularly intensive training comprising more than a few hours of introduction to the jobs portal, was viewed by interviewed job seekers as helpful in improving their employability. While training alone is insufficient to lead to a job placement, even relatively short-term training, particularly if it can be customized to the specific needs of employers with job vacancies, appeared to be useful in overcoming skills gaps.

Job seekers' ability to benefit from online resources is dependent on their ability to access them. Though Foras reports that the numbers are changing, the vast majority of Foras participants did not access e-learning offerings, and it appears that the types of trainings and the means of accessing them were not sufficiently well-matched with job seekers' needs and abilities to access the online resources. The e-learning partner offered very few materials in Arabic. Computer access, bandwidth, the length of time that some of the multimedia modules took to load, and the cost of downloading large files (for those who pay per unit to download) appear to have inhibited full use of e-learning resources. In addition, problems with paying for certificates, which are important in the Iraqi job market, constituted an important limitation.

Many job seekers who were respondents would benefit greatly from intermittent training and follow-up for periods of months to enhance their employability.

3. Recommendations for Question 1.ii

Based on Foras' success with in-person trainings conducted through its Centers of Opportunity (COOs), as reflected in beneficiary feedback, the evaluation team recommends an increased proportion of resource allocation for job acquisition skills training opportunities. JPAs, with access to all of Foras' training and online resources, and with knowledge about employer demands for qualified employees, are well positioned to play an intermediary role to provide intermittent training.

In contexts where Internet access is limited by bandwidth or cost, it is important that online trainings be offered in formats (both in terms of language and bandwidth) that facilitate access by job seekers.

Significant emphasis should be placed on following up with targeted Foras trainees on developing basic keyboard skills, site navigation, and e-learning functions.

It would be valuable to have Arabic-language e-learning materials. USAID/Iraq, together with partners in Egypt and other Middle East countries, should support the development of such materials that could be used throughout the region. This initiative could be led by relevant USAID bureaus including the Bureau for the Middle East, the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment (E3), and the U.S. Global Development Lab.

If there is an extension of Foras, Foras should do more in terms of periodic follow-up with individual beneficiaries who have participated in training to assess what additional support is needed to facilitate increased employment-readiness. More emphasis should be placed on quality follow up with individuals and less emphasis on pursuit of large outreach (portal registration) targets. However, given the current macro-economic and security issues in Iraq, important limitations to employment outcomes – even with a better system of training and follow-up – are likely.

D. Evaluation Question 2: Effectiveness of Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of IDPs with regard to daily and short term jobs

1. Findings for Evaluation Question 2

While Foras' original scope of work included some intervention activities for IDPs, Modification 3 increased focus on these vulnerable populations as targeted groups to be addressed during the second year of the program. During key informant interviews, Foras staff discussed how the program shifted from an initial strategy of placing IDPs in daily/short-term jobs to finding entrepreneurial opportunities for IDPs and longer-term job placement. This shift in strategy was made primarily in response to the reality that very few short-term jobs are available to IDPs that are living in and near the camps in the Kurdistan Region. Most IDPs had limited ability to travel from the camps to job sites (authorization to leave the camps, limited transportation). Moreover, some employers had negative perceptions of IDPs and often hire foreign workers, including Syrian refugees who are willing to perform casual labor for lower wages. In response, Foras focused on training IDPs toward the objective of preparing them for eventual employability with longer-term job opportunities. Foras provided training to 3,860 IDPs that included use of the Foras portal and the mobile technology. In addition, Foras provided training in specialized vocational and job placement skills for IDPs and drop-in center services through a Foras partner.

As discussed in more detail in the methodology in Annex 3, the evaluation team was limited in its ability to directly access large numbers of IDPs in the Kurdistan Region. However, the evaluation team conducted nine focus group discussions in the Kurdistan Region with approximately five to ten individuals in each group. While Foras quarterly reports include success stories of IDPs who found employment, unfortunately none of the (IDP) FGD subjects that the team interviewed reported finding employment. This could be due to limited sampling or could reflect a reality that few IDPs that Foras worked with achieved the goal of employment. Job placements with gender breakdown are measured and reported by embedded Foras staff in the JPAs and catchment teams working with Foras Partner Businesses. Technical teams report on a monthly and quarterly basis with verification by Foras M&E field monitors through field visits to JPAs and surveys of active employers. However, as Foras does not directly track job acquisition or entrepreneurial activities, the numbers of IDPs who have found work or succeeded in establishing SME businesses are unknown.

Foras has faced great challenges in supporting IDPs to obtain employment but has reported large numbers of IDPs who have been trained on registration and use of the portal and mobile technology tools. However, some of the training staff working with Foras partners indicated their belief that the project focuses too heavily on achieving large numbers, and that a better approach would have been to invest in smaller numbers of IDPs, but to more fully prepare them for employment for the few job opportunities that are available.

Despite their having limited employment outcome success, the training that IDPs received was well regarded and valued. A frequent point of discussion during the IDP focus groups, reinforced with comments made by Foras' partner trainers, was that training participation resulted in improved confidence which led them to travel outside the camps in order to look for work in the surrounding communities, despite the discrimination and other challenges that they frequently face outside the camps.

2. Conclusions for Evaluation Question 2

While Foras and its partners have worked with large numbers of IDPs to register them on the portal and provide them with training and the means to use the portal and mobile technologies, there was limited follow-up on its investment in IDP training. IDP beneficiaries were not tracked as individuals in the various training and other activities. Foras' ad hoc approach, although it included many key elements necessary to achieve employability, did not target individual IDP

beneficiaries in a systematic way for multiple trainings and follow up, and as a result brought them only "part way there" to employability in Iraq's competitive labor market.
However, Foras activities have resulted in intangible, positive, and unanticipated benefits to IDPs that have not been captured by the performance indicators or periodic reports. Most notably, Foras' training and other activities with the IDPs provided them with job opportunities, as anecdotally reported, as well as enabling confidence to travel into the surrounding community, despite significant language challenges and widespread discrimination, a barrier to employment that may be under-emphasized in Foras' underlying assumptions.

3. Recommendations for Evaluation Question 2

Foras should shift the current emphasis away from achieving large participant numbers in portal-related training and registrations. Most beneficiaries whose program participation is limited to these initial activities still lack basic employability skills and are unaware of next steps that should or can be taken to find employment. Instead, tracking (albeit smaller) numbers of beneficiaries who have registered on Foras' portal, and following through with them to complete CVs and participate in additional training to address gaps in employability competencies would enable IDPs to take advantage of available employment opportunities. Indeed, Foras has done this on a limited basis through the Erbil-based call center, which has contacted some beneficiaries who have posted only partial CVs on the portal and assisted them with completion and posting. Similar activities that track and facilitate additional training opportunities for individuals would capitalize on the achievements that the program has already made. More intensive tracking of beneficiaries may result in fewer numbers being reported overall, but those beneficiaries who receive more specialized skills training will be better prepared for employment, and larger employment numbers would be achieved.

In order to enable this, USAID should adopt a system that tracks individuals through their learning stages toward employability. This will lead to a more complete package of competencies among individual beneficiaries receiving more intensive services of longer duration.

Key achievements of the program, including changes in IDP attitudes and behaviors, are not being captured in Foras' reporting. Data that support these achievements can be collected through beneficiary surveys. Outcome mapping[6] is an additional, well-accepted evaluation tool that can be used to document and measure intangible, though critical, changes in beneficiary attitudes and behaviors. Outcome mapping recognizes that development is essentially about people relating to each other and their environment. The originality of this approach lies in its shift away from assessing the products of a program to focus on changes in behavior, relationships, actions, and activities in the people, groups, and organizations it works with directly.

[6] Source: IDRC, "Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection Into Development Programs;" http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/openebooks/959-3/index.html; accessed 5/9/15. For a brief summary of outcome mapping, also see: Terry Smutylo, "Outcome mapping: A method for tracking behavioural changes in development programs."

E. EVALUATION QUESTION 3 – EFFECTIVENESS AND CONSISTENCY OF FORAS' APPLICATION OF A STRATEGY FOR REDUCING GENDER GAPS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB ACQUISITION

1. Findings for Evaluation Question 3

Foras was successful in establishing and meeting targets that resulted in high participation numbers for women in training and other job acquisition and entrepreneurship activities.

In addition, Foras had two dedicated women, youth and vulnerable people advisors, one based in Erbil and one in Baghdad, who conducted focus groups, provided training, and periodically met with appropriate government officials, international NGO officers, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, and local NGOs to coordinate outreach and facilitate livelihoods for women.

However, the program design, as articulated in Foras' original scope of work, subsequent modifications, annual work plans, and PMP did not incorporate gender theory in an explicit way, and the project did not identify a specific strategy in its approach to project design that addresses gender gaps. Foras' project included training for job acquisition, entrepreneurship, and special skills (vocational training) that were exclusively for women beneficiaries. Interviews with Foras staff and training partners who were focused on the gender aspects of the program did not reveal any specific strategies for increasing numbers of women project participants beyond efforts to outreach for women-only activities and to create an inclusive environment. For example, Foras' women's advisor described how, in Basra, after completing "Women Work" PSO training, participants were then referred to livelihoods training (sewing skills) conducted by the Red Crescent and United Nations Human Rights Council.

As another example, Foras' training partner provided a five-day entrepreneurship training course to nearly 700 participants – more than 90 percent of whom were women – that was unanimously well-received by the beneficiaries who were interviewed by the evaluation team. However, the training participants had a wide diversity of skills, education, and socio-economic backgrounds. Training participants who were interviewed included a medical doctor as well as a number of women with only a few years of formal education. Some had attended training out of a general, non-specific interest in entrepreneurship while others attended under a misunderstanding that they would receive grant funding to start a business after they had completed the course. However, the entrepreneur component of Foras did not include SME business grants, and they were never part of this program. After the training courses, the Foras project did not include any follow up in the form of mentoring or activities to support women entrepreneurs in finding access to finance. None of the women entrepreneurs interviewed reported having access to finance beyond personal savings or family loans.

2. Conclusions for Evaluation Question 3

Increasing numbers of women participants in Foras activities is an important component of a strategy to reduce gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship. Women, however, especially those with lower socio-economic status, often face important cultural and security barriers to private sector employment that cannot be addressed entirely within the scope of Foras' activities. Other critical barriers to private sector employment that women face include a lack of labor laws that regulate work hours, childcare, workplace discrimination, and harassment. Despite success in achieving large numbers of women beneficiaries in Foras' training activities, job fairs, and other entrepreneurship-related activities, there were systemic limitations to what a workforce development and entrepreneurship focused program could achieve to reduce gender gaps.

Foras provided entrepreneurship training using a standardized curriculum that, according the evaluation team's review, was comprehensive and high quality. While it was appropriate for training participants who already had some business skills and/or some private sector job experience, there were no options offered that could be tailored to meet the specific and unique needs of key types of SMEs such as, for example, the service industry, small shops or manufacturing. Basic concepts such as market environments, revenue structures, and risk profiles, as well as marketing strategies and finance needs are all critical elements that need to be grasped by an entrepreneur through training or experience and vary widely between types of SMEs. Foras' one-size-fits-all approach to entrepreneurship training does not take these differences into account, especially given the very challenging economic and regulatory environment faced by inexperienced entrepreneurs in Iraq. Lack of access to finance is an additional barrier to Foras entrepreneurship training participants who wish to start businesses or grow their existing businesses.

3. Recommendations for Evaluation Question 3

Addressing all the systemic barriers that contribute to the gender gap in women's private sector employment is beyond the scope of the Foras program, or any similar sector-focused workforce development program. However, USAID should consider an approach to workforce program design that facilitates close cooperation with other programs that address barriers to women's employment. A key example is USAID/Iraq's Access to Justice Program (A2J), where Foras has already collaborated with A2J Clinics in order to reach women, youth and vulnerable groups receiving services from the A2J network. USAID could expand this in future programming to the policy level in order to advocate for policy reforms in labor law, including key provisions for work hours, equal pay, and workplace harassment policies. Program integration allows for the synergies that are necessary to address gender gaps and women's empowerment in the private sector.

Although ambitious big picture recommendation for cross-cutting programs that address gender gaps should considered in order to facilitate systemic change, USAID could also affect gender gaps on a smaller scale for its beneficiaries by taking an approach that considers women job seekers as individuals with unique challenges and needs. While it is not realistic to expect Foras to address systemic gender gaps, USAID can affect women's employment by working closely with JPAs and employers on the demand side, and individual women job seekers on the supply side to improve the prospects of individual job seekers and the supply of skilled women available for individual employers. Nearly all the employers and JPAs that were interviewed expressed an interest in hiring women. Although the reasons varied and in some cases were not completely clear (e.g., whether they were perceived as being more conscientious or could simply be paid less), women were viewed favorably as job candidates; based on employer interviews there is a clear demand especially for women in professional positions and/or office environments. However, the JPAs, employers, and many women beneficiaries themselves discussed women candidates not being able to accept job offers because of long work hours, security risks in traveling to the job, or other considerations that affect women more than men in Iraq. In order to increase the numbers of successful placements, Foras should work with the JPAs and employers to sensitize them to the constraints that women candidates may face in a given work situation and facilitate solutions that would allow employers to hire and retain valuable workers, and allow women to work in private sector settings. Foras has described having addressed this through a series of more than 300 Business Forum events for partner businesses designed to, among other objectives, promote more opportunities for women job seekers; these were not raised during the evaluation team's discussion with the sample of employers interviewed. While the systemic barriers are considerable, Foras should focus on micro-scale interventions with individual women job seekers and employers to facilitate employment that benefits both.

Foras should also take a more tailored approach to entrepreneurship training and development, one that takes into account the diversity in competencies and approaches that are more closely aligned to the realities different SME market sectors. For an inexperienced entrepreneur, training alone is not enough in Iraq's difficult economic environment. Foras should follow up with training participants, and provide referrals or access to successful mentors who understand the entrepreneur's business realities. Foras and/or its partners should include staff or partners who have deep knowledge of and success in Iraq's SME markets in order to understand the gaps that entrepreneurs need to address in order to be successful.

In addition, lack of access to finance is one of the most important constraints to the establishment and growth of SMEs. Foras' original scope of work did not include access to finance, resulting in a key barrier to Foras' entrepreneurs that remains unaddressed. Access to finance can be facilitated through partnerships with microfinance institutions such as USAID's former Tijara partners, or through partnerships with banks. While Foras did try to broker grants to entrepreneurs via some Tijara microfinance industry (MFI) partners through the business plan competitions, the number of competition winners was very small; the number of viable business plans within the acceptable loan size limitations of a typical MFI smaller still. Examples of success stories where USAID has successfully integrated entrepreneurship programs with banks and MFIs include the Lebanon Investment in Microfinance (LIM) program implemented by the International Executive Service Corps,[7] where a number of local partners are successfully facilitating access to finance for a wide diversity and large number of SME entrepreneurs.

F. Evaluation Question 4: Design of Foras' PMP to monitor implementation progress

1. Findings for Evaluation Question 4

The project documents including Foras' original Statement of Work (SOW), later modifications to the cooperative agreement, annual work plans, and several iterations of the PMP do not

[7] USAID/Lebanon's Lebanon Investment in Microfinance (LIM) final program evaluation that includes relevant information on entrepreneurship can be found on the DEC at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00k8q1.pdf. In addition, an entrepreneurship sector assessment for USAID/Lebanon's access to finance programming, implemented by the International Executive Service Corps, will be also be available on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) in the coming months.

articulate a coherent underlying hypothesis or theory of change for the project design. In addition, several key issues with the PMP indicators limit Foras' ability to adequately capture and measure the project's performance. A key shortcoming is the lack of outcome indicators to track job seekers' employability as they reach milestones that represent intermediate achievement toward finding a job. In addition, there is no systematic tracking of individual training participants through their stages of employability, job acquisition, or business establishment. According to the evaluation team's interview with the Foras Chief of Party, Foras measures and reports job placement through the portal by counting the number of posted jobs that have been de-listed.

Project documents, including the PMP and annual work plans, do not clearly define the vulnerable populations that the project is intended to target as women, youth, and IDPs. However, despite the wide socio-economic diversity within these groups, they are treated as homogeneous in terms of their job skills and barriers to employment. As a result, the numbers of beneficiaries who are among the most vulnerable groups cannot be precisely measured, as the program's most vulnerable beneficiaries have not been precisely defined.

2. Conclusions for Evaluation Question 4

Foras' PMP is focused on indicators that measure performance of individual activities or project components that implicitly hypothesizes a dual client approach to meeting the employability needs of job seekers as well as enabling access to skilled workers for employers. The project design is based on an implied linear logic model with the Foras portal as the core component. The underlying assumption, expressed explicitly in key informant interviews (KII) by Foras staff, is that introducing large numbers of beneficiaries to the portal through basic training and registration will result in increased employment. Similarly, Foras' focus on maximum numbers of job postings will result in greater availability of skilled job candidates for employers.

Based on KIIs with senior Foras staff, the implicit assumption is that the successful implementation of the portal would in itself provide much of what is needed to connect job seekers to employers. Great emphasis is placed on registering large numbers of beneficiaries on the portal, and monitored through indicator *S-IR2.2.1.b # of job seekers registered through Foras program assistance*. Importantly, however, Foras has not used a valid, reliable, accurate means to collect data intended to be used to count persons receiving employment. This data is also used as an F indicator:

> *4.6.3-2 Number of persons receiving new employment or better employment (including better self-employment) as a result of participation in USG-funded workforce development programs*

The PMP indicators also do not capture some of Foras' achievements in changes in attitudes and behaviors that were discussed and anecdotally described in interviews with employers, various beneficiaries including IDPs, and KIIs with trainers. Reported changes include improved confidence among job seekers who participated in various Foras activities, and changes in attitudes and behaviors among JPAs and employers away from traditional hiring based on patronage and towards adopting more merit-based, transparent hiring practices.

Moreover, in line with the Mission-wide definition of vulnerable groups, which include youth, women, and IDPs, Foras indicators included in the PMP on training activities do not take socio-economic differences into account. As a result of imprecise definitions, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Foras has targeted vulnerable youth, women, or IDPs.

3. Recommendations for Question 4

A PMP should be developed around an underlying change theory in order to view the complex array of program components as an interrelated system that all support the overall supply and demand objectives for private sector employment.

Job placement indicators should be based on verified placements, not simply job postings that have been de-listed on the portal. In addition, performance indicators should be selected that measure narrowing intermediate skills gaps that constrain the employability of job seekers, as well as the availability of skilled workers for employers. Indicators should be chosen or designed that measure progress toward closing the intermediate gaps. Examples could include:

- Number of women who accepted a job offer. Gap: women who are unable to accept the terms of a private sector position.
- Number of beneficiaries completing an online e-learning course. Gap: technical barriers and user-friendliness (perceived or real) of electronic training modules.
- Number of entrepreneurs who were able to access adequate financing after completing a business plan. Gap: lack of access to financial services for SMEs.

These are illustrative examples of indicators that are focused on unmet needs that were identified by beneficiaries in FGDs or other qualitative interviews. Where gaps are identified, corresponding indicators can be designed in order to align program activities with beneficiary and stakeholder needs.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Program design, along with the PMP and performance indicators, should be developed based on an underlying theory of change. A systems approach is more appropriate to a complex multi-component program than the implied linear model that appears to have been used to develop the Foras program.

Although the Foras program was developed to support private sector development, the model is not closely aligned with market incentives that, if built into the program, would improve service delivery for job seekers and employers and provide the means for the program to become sustainable. Without any fee structures involved, there are no incentives for improved screening of job candidates, listing only active and open job postings, and follow through with individual job seekers to connect with employers.

The Foras technologies that have been developed have significant market value, and current numbers of job seekers and job postings have reached a “critical mass” such that the system (portal) is attractive to the private sector and should be sold/transferred/privatized in accordance with USAID’s DO to support private sector development. Monster.com and Bayt.com present two examples of successful private sector job placement portals. Moreover, and as noted earlier, there are examples of US-based sector jobs portals that were initially developed through public sector investments that have successfully transitioned later to the private sector.

The call center is an essential component of the Foras system. Foras' call center is an important and valuable resource for job seekers, JPAs, and employers, as well as a resource for program monitoring through beneficiary surveys. Call center services should be expanded to monitor and track individual beneficiaries in order to ensure that their needs are met as they work to develop employability-related competencies. The call center already does this on a limited basis (e.g., contacting registrants who have incomplete or missing CVs); this resource should be fully exploited. The call center's primary functions should be to monitor job seekers' progress, provide individual assistance with using the portal technology, and provide referrals to job seekers for opportunities for training and mentoring within and outside Foras. The call center should be used to monitor beneficiaries after they have participated in a training event to help identify and take next steps.

The call center can also provide referral services for job seekers to connect with opportunities for training from other non-Foras sources including the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs , which offers vocational training at no cost to beneficiaries. Foras did not (and does not need to) provide all the training for its registered job seekers. Vocational and employability training can be fee-based in many cases, leveraging Foras program resources and taking advantage of other employment training opportunities that beneficiaries may not be aware of or know how to take advantage of. There could also be a small grants component administered by the call center to provide full or partial scholarships for needy job seekers to subsidize training fees where appropriate.

Although training was a central component of the Foras program, most training events were short (from a few hours to less than a day) and were focused on system registration and introduction to using the Foras portal. Although there were relatively few vocational "special skills" training events that were typically 3-5 days in length (approximately 150 out of a total of 2,500 Foras training events), they were well-received and valued by training participants. Additional emphasis on more substantive training would be expected to result in higher overall employment numbers for job seekers.

JPAs are an essential component to the Foras system. These private sector profit-motive business partners have strong incentives to serve both job seekers and employers seeking qualified workers. Additional support should be provided to the JPAs to do their own outreach and marketing with employers as well as working directly with job seekers, providing employability (job skills) training and assistance with portal registration, good quality CVs, and other basic skills development. The JPAs could have their training costs subsidized while retaining their core revenue generating activities of connecting job seekers with employers. "Professionalizing" JPAs should be a core activity focus of continued Foras-type programming, including further capacity building, pre-screening applicants to ensure they meet minimal qualifications for employers, and training in marketing through social media and other means to expand their employer client base. JPAs should also assume the burden for working with employers providing support such as assistance in writing job descriptions for postings, ensuring that posted positions are "real," including assuring that positions that have been filled or are otherwise no longer open are removed from the portal database. In short, the JPAs should become one-stop career centers, partially subsidized for training costs, but essentially businesses with market incentives to improve the quality and efficiency of Foras-portal based job placements for all stakeholders.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

STATEMENT OF WORK
USAID/Iraq's Foras (Opportunities in Arabic)
Final Project Performance Evaluation

Draft 10 December 2014
[This SOW was revised on 14 June, 2015, to reflect the correct IR and sub-IR numbers in page 31 and 32]

Contents

I. Background

The USAID/Iraq Opportunities Project (*Foras*) is a two and half year, $ 47.1 million, demand driven workforce development project that works with the private sector to generate jobs, thus reducing under and unemployment in Iraq's most vulnerable population segments. This is accomplished through a job portal and mobile applications which matches job seekers with employment opportunities. To assist in filling these positions, USAID/Foras focuses on improving the employability of Iraq's labor force through skills training and education. The project also provides entrepreneurs with the learning tools and resources necessary to grow and expand their businesses, thus leading to expanded employment prospects. Of particular interest to USAID/Foras is addressing the needs of women, youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable populations. The project has a microfinance oversight component that involves a risk assessment, field audits and facilitates reporting of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), previously funded by USAID/Tijara project.

A. Development Context

Unemployment, underemployment and a lack of low middle class economic opportunity threatens Iraqi security and stability over the medium term. Depending upon the source consulted the level of national unemployment in Iraq ranges between 15-20 percent. Underemployment further exacerbates this problem. The problem of under and unemployment in Iraq is directly tied to the country's over-reliance upon public sector employment and a disconnect between the needs of the employer and the capabilities of the labor force it needs to draw upon. The rate of new market entrants, illiteracy and socio-cultural restrictions further impede the efficiency of the labor market by restricting the mobility of labor and the degree to which women participate in the labor market.

After Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) seized territory in June 2014, women are becoming the first victims in this conflict and the last to be rehabilitated. The United Nations Population Fund warned that about 250,000 Iraqi women and girls, including nearly 60,000 pregnant women, were in need of urgent care. Now that ISIL controls roughly one-third of Iraq, the numbers are estimated to be much higher.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, issued a blanket condemnation of ISIL tactics in August 2014. "Since the recent outbreak of violence, an estimated 1.2 million Iraqis have fled their homes amidst indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas. In such circumstances, women and girls are especially vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Project efforts on supporting women, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), especially those in camps, find daily or temporary jobs has been instrumental in the last few months.

Iraq's National Development Plan 2013-2017 is based on nine fundamental assumptions that are considered the methodological foundation for preparing the Plan, two of the most important which are:

- Job-creating economic growth is the guiding principle of investment in order to respond to unemployment and poverty according to the principle of sustainable justice. A continued emphasis on empowerment as the basis of developing human capital. Effective empowerment guarantees consolidation of the principles of a knowledge economy that strengthens the role of women and youth in development.

- The traditional nature of the Iraqi labor market is only the reflection of the political, economic and social situation that Iraq is experiencing. This has made Iraq a market that is not keeping pace with international developments, and does not respond to the increasing quantitative supply of the Iraqi labor force. In fact, unemployment rates among young graduates in the 15-29 age brackets reached 24.2 percent in the year 2011 in light of the absence of an effective employment policy and the weak role of the private sector.

One of the Plan's Economic Goals is to raise the level of productivity among workers and in economic activities' and workers' productivity in order to increase competitiveness and diversification in the economy and to allow the private sector to play an active role in investment and protected jobs creation.

One of the Plan's Social Goals is to build the capacities of women and youth in terms of knowledge, skills and health. This would guarantee an increase of their participation in the developmental system.

In spite of the fact that USAID/Foras has not been directly working with the GOI, however the project work with the Iraqi private sector and job seekers has been complementing the government efforts and directly support these objectives to improve the lives of the Iraqi people.

B. Identifying Information

1. Project: USAID/Foras Project
2. Agreement No. AID-267-LA-13-00001
3. Project Location: Five catchment areas of Iraq: Baghdad, Erbil, Najaf, Karbala, Basra and newly added provinces of IDPs in Suleimaniyah, Dohuk and communities bordering Erbil in Independent Kurdistan Region
4. Award Dates: February 2013 – August 2015
5. Funding: $ 47,153,771
6. Implementing Organization (Grantee): FHI 360
7. Target Population: All Iraqi workforce with special emphasis on vulnerable population
8. Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR): Rebecca Acuna, Deputy Director, Office of Governance and Economic Opportunity
9. USAID Mission & Office: USAID/Iraq/ Office of Governance and Economic Opportunity

C. USAID/Foras Intended Results

The program aims to contribute to Development Objective (DO) 2 **"**Create conditions for private sector growth" results of the 2013-2015 USAID/Iraq Mission PMP document. USAID/Foras provides technical assistance, training and integrated IT solutions to job seekers and the private sector with special emphasis on IDPs and the vulnerable population.

USAID/Foras will directly contribute to **IR 2.2: "Employment opportunities for private sector development created"**

These activities lead to the outcome of sub IRs:

- **2.2.1** Support to labor markets to meet employer needs increased
- **2.2.2** Private sector strengthened through targeted trainings and opportunities (including initiatives for vulnerable populations).

Indicators to measure the success of the project are identified in the project PMP. The Mission-level indicators to measure success IR 2.2 and Sub-IR 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 are included in the Project Results Framework.

USAID-Foras addresses workforce development from a new prospective in Iraq that uses the job portal and mobile applications to match job applicants with prospective employers. It also conducts instructor led soft skills trainings as well as entrepreneurship courses to enable participants to upgrade their capabilities to attain gainful employment.

Several project activities contribute to this goal; the following are some examples: the training component both instructor-led and online courses are focused on upgrading capabilities of job seekers to match the private sector job requirements which enhance economic competitiveness. In an attempt to change the mindset on working in the public sector, most of the training events include an awareness briefing of the private sector and the tangible rewards it offers.
The entrepreneurship training coaches participants in developing business plans enabling them to start and/or expand their businesses. Furthermore, startup weekend and business plan competition activities open the door for participants to be active players in the local economy.

The project has focused on supporting women, youth and IDPs. More than 25 percent of project participants are women both in landing jobs and entrepreneurship training. Targeted events called "women work" are designed to upgrade their skills to attain employment. Youth trainings were conducted in both public and private universities to ensure their inclusion in proficiencies enhancement. IDPs have been recently re-emphasized to assist them to find daily and temporary jobs.

Foras adjusted its posture to respond to the developing humanitarian crisis. Usage of services like the online job portal and the matching platform of the SMS short code (1025) are only increasing, underscoring the platform's potential to reach job seekers marginalized by the conflict.

D. Existing Information

The evaluation should build on, rather than duplicate, existing performance information on USAID/Foras. Therefore, USAID/Iraq will provide the evaluation team with a full package of briefing materials. The team should familiarize themselves with these documents and use them for developing the evaluation design and implementation plan before arrival in Iraq. These documents include:

- Program description and subsequent modifications
- Agreement and modifications

- Project annual work plans
- Project weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual reports and snap shots
- Letters of agreement with partners
- Relevant Performance Management Plans, including recent performance data table
- Project GIS maps/and or project dashboard information
- USAID Evaluation Policy of January 2011
- USAID/Iraq Mission Order on Performance Management of January 2012
- Checklist for Assessing USAID Evaluation Reports, V1.0

II. Evaluation Purpose and Use

A. Evaluation Purpose

This will be a final summative performance evaluation for the USAID/Foras Project ending on August 6, 2015.

The purposes of this evaluation are to:

1) Ensure project results were achieved through its activities.
2) Substantiate the pros and cons of extending project activities beyond the current completion date of August 2015 both in time and funding.
3) Determine the extent to which the performance management plan (PMP) has captured valid data and measured progress towards achieving project objectives and specifically under IR 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

B. Audience and Intended Uses

The audience of the evaluation will be mainly the USAID/Iraq Mission and its office of Governance and Economic Opportunity. Results will also be shared with USAID/Washington Middle East Bureau and it would be useful to other donors working in the workforce arena. The results of this evaluation will inform USAID of the lessons learned, success stories and applicability of replication to other workforce development projects in the MENA region.

III. Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent was Foras' technology and information driven approach effective in achieving project goals given the target population?
   i. To what extent have employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras?
   ii. How effective was project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops?
2. How effective was Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of IDPs with regard to daily and short term jobs?
3. How effective and consistent was Foras' application of a strategy for reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and job acquisition?
4. How could Foras' PMP have been designed to better monitor implementation progress?

IV. Evaluation Design and Methodology

A. Evaluation Design

This is a performance evaluation. It will be led and facilitated by an independent consultant team under the M&E contractor. The evaluation employs a non-experimental evaluation design and uses a range of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods in answering the evaluation questions.

B. Data Collection Method

To address the evaluation questions, the evaluation team will visit a representative sample of USAID/Foras employers, intermediaries, trainees, and job seekers who have been employed through the project to undertake the evaluation research. They will also disaggregate data by catchment areas and IDP regions that the project has been working with. This includes but is not limited to: Baghdad, Erbil, Najaf, Karbala, Basra, Suleimaniyah and Dohuk.

Research interviews shall be conducted to assure inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups.

Discussions shall address outcome on males and females. Any limitations on the methodology shall be specifically noted, e.g. selection or recall bias, and unobservable differences between comparator groups.

Evaluation findings shall be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data, and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or the compilation of people's opinions. For example, an opinion expressed by a single respondent shall be discounted unless a representative sample of respondents are interviewed about the same issue, in which case the number of people interviewed, the questions asked, and the counts of responses shall all be presented. In general, findings should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.

The implementer is expected to propose a more detailed evaluation design in its implementation plan, and send that plan and design for approval to USAID/Iraq prior to the start of travel to Iraq. In line with this, the evaluation team shall outline and further break up the evaluation questions to indicate measures or indicators, targets, baseline data (if any), data sources, sample sizes, data collection instruments and data analysis and comments on any data limitations for each of the sub-questions identified. Due to data limitations this performance evaluation will only incorporate before-after comparisons. The evaluation team shall present the approved evaluation plan and design to the USAID/GEO and Program Office representatives during the initial evaluation briefing, which will be held before start of the field work.

V. Evaluation Timeline and Logistics

A. Timeline

Document Review and Evaluation Plan (~December/January)

- Evaluation Design Plan Draft from QED to USAID (1 week)
- USAID Comments returned to implementer (1 week)
- Team selection and approval (6 weeks)

- Team working remotely on documents review and preparation for field work. (3 weeks)
- Final Evaluation Design Plan QED to USAID

Field Work (~February/March)
- Travel to the Field (2 days)
- Team Planning Meeting and Briefing 1 -Design Plan (2 days)
- Field Work (6 weeks)
- Midterm Briefing 2 - Preliminary Findings (2 days)
- Data Analysis and Report Drafting (1 week)
- Final USAID Briefing 3 - Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations (1 day)
- Return from Field

Report Writing (March/April)
- Report Writing (2 weeks)
- Evaluation Draft Report Submission to USAID for Review
- USAID/IRAQ Review of Draft Report (1 week)
- QED Evaluation Team Incorporation of Round One Comments (1.5 weeks)
- USAID/IRAQ Review Revised Report (1 week)
- March 10-15: QED Evaluation Team Incorporation of Round Two Comments (1 week)
- Final Report Editing & Finalization by QED (1 week)
- Final Report Submission to USAID
- Final Report Sign Off by USAID (1 week)

B. Logistics
Logistical support to be provided by the implementer includes: international travel, as necessary, meeting and interview scheduling, secretarial and office support, interpretation, translation, report printing and communication, badges, and life and security support, as appropriate. Staff from USAID and Foras may be contacted to assist in setting up of interviews, organizing logistics for focus groups and coordinating the work of the field research team (if relevant). A 6-day work week is authorized in Iraq with no premium pay. Friday and Saturday are weekend; the team may choose one of these two days as an “off” day.

VI. Stakeholder Participation

Note that the final evaluation plan including the design will be shared with the intended audience as well as staff of USAID-Foras prior to being finalized. Their views will be solicited on how the evaluation can best be structured to meet their needs.

VII. Evaluation Products

A. Deliverables

- **Evaluation Design Plan Draft and Final** - Prior to arrival in-country the evaluation team will review relevant background documents and draft and finalized the evaluation design plan. The evaluation design plan will include evaluation questions, methods, deliverables, and timeline. Indicators that will be used to judge the level of sustainability achieved by the project will be specified in the evaluation design plan, citing the source or model upon which the indicators were established.

- **Team Planning Meeting** - The evaluation team will hold an initial two-day team planning meeting. As part of this meeting, the team will meet with the USG team (USAID and other key implementing agencies), in order to review the purpose and scope of work, and finalize the review questions, methods, deliverables, and timeline. If the U.S. expatriate team has been requested to conduct the evaluation remotely, the two-day team planning meeting may occur via electronic means.
- **Mid-term briefing** (Preliminary Findings) – After field work is completed, the evaluation team will hold a midterm briefing meeting to present the field work progress and next steps for data analysis and report drafting. This meeting will involve an oral presentation and any necessary handouts and may occur virtually
- **Exit Briefing** - Prior to the submission of the draft report, the evaluation team will hold a formal debriefing meeting to present the major findings and recommendations of the evaluation. This meeting will involve an oral presentation and any necessary handouts. The meeting will be planned to include time for dialogue and feedback.
- **Evaluation Report Draft** - The evaluation team will provide USAID/Iraq with a draft report that includes all the components of the final evaluation report. USAID/Iraq will provide comments on the draft report to the evaluation team within five working days, respectively, of receiving the report. The evaluation team will then revise the draft report and re-submit the revised draft report to USAID/Iraq for final review. USAID/Iraq will provide final comments on the revised draft report to the evaluation team within six working days of receiving the revised draft report. The evaluation team will incorporate final comments into the revised draft report and submit the final report to QED for editing and formatting within two days of receiving final comments from USAID.
- **Evaluation Report Final** - QED will edit and format the final report within 10 working days of receiving final USAID approval of the report's content. The final report will not exceed 45 pages and will be submitted to USAID in electronic form. The report will be a public document and will be posted on the DEC.

B. Design Plan Structure and Format

A table showing the identified research question and sub-questions as developed by the evaluation team, measures or indicators, targets, baseline data (if any), data sources, sample sizes/census, data collection instruments and data analysis plan.

C. Evaluation Report Structure and Format

A. Executive Summary

B. The page count of the executive summary is approximately 10 percent of the page count of the main report, generally 3 to 5 pages. It should exactly mimic the content of the main report, including precisely the same report headings, though in condensed form focusing on findings and results. It should stand alone as a complete document suitable for circulation apart from the main report.

C. Table of Contents

D. **Report** (maximum 45 pages, excluding graphics, tables and annexes)
   a. Introduction (purpose, audience)
   b. Background (overview of USAID/Foras)
   c. Methodology (overview only, reserving details for the annex)
   d. Findings (respond explicitly to each research question, with evidence)
   e. Conclusions (supported by set of findings)
   f. Recommendations (specific and action oriented)
   g. Lessons Learned
E. **References**
F. **Annexes**
   a. Evaluation Statement of Work (including modifications, if any)
   b. Statement of Differences (significant unresolved differences of opinion between the implementer and USAID/Iraq, or among the members of the implementing team or their managers)
   c. Research Tools (questionnaires, checklists, survey instruments, discussion guides, etc.)
   d. Sources of Information and list of people interviewed (with contact information)
   e. Data and Records (survey responses, interview transcripts, etc. in an electronic file in easily readable format, organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation, owned by USAID, and suitable for provision to the public)
   f. list of documents reviewed
   g. Translation in Arabic
   h. Glossary of Terms
   i. Conflict of Interest Statements

The format of the report shall adhere to the following:

- Microsoft Word
- 12-point Times News Roman type font for the body of the report
- 1 inch top/bottom and left/right margins
- USAID branding and marking

VIII. Evaluation Team Composition

The workforce development Team Leader (an international consultant) will lead a team consisting of: a team member Entrepreneurship specialist (international consultant), , a team member Evaluation specialist (international consultant), a local expert and if needed, a locally hired team to collect information. If a local team is involved in the study, the team members will be trained by the evaluation specialist on how to conduct interviews and summarize results using standard format for putting later into the system. If local team members are not able to organize data in English and put it into the system, the M&E contractor will provide this support. All attempts should be made for the team to be comprised of an equal number of male and female members, especially as field staff may be called upon to interview groups of both genders.

The expatriate consultants will be responsible for developing and ensuring implementation of the evaluation plan and the work plan, conducting part of the interviews and focus groups, analyzing survey and other interview data, performing document review, presenting preliminary findings, and compiling the final evaluation report.

The evaluation team shall include:

Team Leader- (International) – This person should have a professional background in workforce development and training and preferably in its relevant IT technology. He/she must have a strong background in international development work and development program evaluations in economic growth sector. He/she should have a minimum of ten (15) years of related experience in workforce development, with five years in conflict and post conflict societies. Ability to conduct interviews and discussions and to write in English is required. Knowledge of USAID economic development programming is required. Knowledge of the host country language(s) is a plus, but not required, as long as one team member is fluent (written and spoken). Previous experience and background knowledge in Iraq or the Middle East region is preferable.

Team Member- (International) - Entrepreneurship– This person should have professional experience in entrepreneurships and entrepreneurial training, business startups and their creation and expansion. Experience in two or more of those areas: business plan competition, start-up weekends, basic business skills training and mentoring, business registration and introductions and business networks is highly preferable.. He/she should have a minimum of ten (10) years of relevant experience in the subject areas as well as in evaluation of projects and preferably a minimum of two years in post conflict societies.

Team Member- (International) - Evaluation Expert– This person should have a minimum of seven (7) years of related experience in planning, designing and conducting evaluations and assessments including impact and performance evaluations of donor/international development projects in economic growth/poverty reduction sector. The expert should have education and extensive experience in statistics and statistical research and methodologies, should be able to lead the development of the research plan, including sampling, selection methods as well as statistical analysis of collected data. He/she must have previous experience leading a local research team. English language knowledge is required. Familiarity with Middle East is desirable but not required. Knowledge of host country language(s) is a plus, but not required, as long as one team member is fluent (written and spoken).

Team Member – Local Expert (Local) with a minimum of seven (7) years of experience in workforce development, economic development, entrepreneurship and training. Experience of participating as a team member in conducting assessment and/or project evaluation is highly preferable. The local expert will serve as a liaison between the international experts and the data collection team (if relevant), he/she will also provide significant local expertise about the situation, culture, geography, etc. as needed; will provide support in identifying and contacting local stakeholders, helping arranging meetings, performing translation/interpretation when needed. English language knowledge is a requirement.

Admin/logistical support person (Local) – assigned by the M&E contractor to the team to assist with travel, meeting arrangements, accommodation and any other administrative and office support required to the team.

If a local organization and/or individuals are contracted to provide data collection, they need to have demonstrated experience in conducting interviews, surveys, or other data collection.

All evaluation team members shall demonstrate familiarity with USAID's January 2011 Evaluation Policy. All team members will be required to provide to USAID a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest. The incumbents should have considerable experience in designing, monitoring and evaluating development assistance programs. They must have excellent written and oral presentation skills.

IX. Technical Direction

Technical direction during the performance of this evaluation will be provided by USAID/Iraq Office of Governance and Economic Opportunity (GEO) through the APM/COR in the Program Office. The GEO Office will provide the evaluation team with relevant USAID documentation to review and a list of suggested contacts to interview.

Clearance Page – Foras Final Evaluation SOW:

Drafted: Ishayeb/GEO

GEO/DOD Rebecca Acuna __cleared____________ date: 18 October 2014

GEO/OD Kaya Adams ____cleared_____________ date: 10 December 2014

PRO/OD Amy Koler ______cleared ____________ date: 10 December 2014

ANNEX 2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assumption: A proposition that is taken for granted, as if it were true. For project management, assumptions are hypotheses about causal linkages or factors that could affect the progress or success of an intervention.

Conclusion: A judgment based on a synthesis of empirical findings and factual statements.

Evaluation: A systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program, or policy. Evaluations are undertaken to (a) improve the performance of existing interventions or policies; (b) assess their effects and impacts; and (c) inform decisions about future programming. Evaluations are formal analytical endeavors involving systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.

Findings: Factual statements about a project or program based on empirical evidence. Findings include statements and visual representations of the data, but not interpretations, judgments, or conclusions about what the findings may mean or imply.

Focus group: A group of people convened for the purpose of obtaining perceptions or opinions, suggesting ideas, or recommending actions. A focus group is a method of collecting information for the evaluation process that relies on the particular dynamic of group settings.

Impact: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended – inter alia, impacts may be economic, institutional, technological, environmental, sociocultural, or gender-related; measurement of extent of impacts (if possible, a cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken).

Lessons learned: Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with activities, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons learned highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

Performance Management Plan: A tool used by USAID Missions, Offices, and assistance objective teams to plan and manage the process of assessing and reporting progress toward achieving an assistance objective.

Objective: A statement of the condition or state one expects to achieve.

Project: A discrete activity (or "development intervention") implemented by a defined set of implementers and designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules. A set of projects makes up the portfolio of a program.

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed: sustainability of benefits (technological, social, environmental, gender); sustainability of institutional capacity; and maintenance of future recurrent budget (financial sustainability).

Theory of Change: An outgrowth of repeated successful proofs of a hypothesis; the process by which an intervention or a series of interventions changes a situation from one condition to another.

Annex 3. Supplement to Methodology

Due to time limitations, the Foras implementing partner, stakeholders, and beneficiaries were not available to participate in the design of the evaluation. The evaluation data collection activities were conducted between April 6 and May 17, 2015. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed. Qualitative data from program beneficiaries was collected through an online survey that was disseminated through announcements on the Foras Facebook page as well as through a bulk email announcement sent by Foras to its registered portal users. The survey database used a Google Docs platform that was not accessible to Foras or partner personnel to view results. In addition, the APM team of data collectors also purposely sampled beneficiaries who are not active online in order to administer a paper version of the survey such as with IDPs and others with limited Internet access.

The quantitative beneficiary survey data was combined in a mixed methods design with beneficiary focus groups as well as with qualitative interviews with individual beneficiaries. A number of online survey respondents voluntarily provided contact information that enabled follow-up, in-depth interviews by telephone. In some cases, in-person survey respondents filled out survey forms that were followed up by more in-depth qualitative interviews.

Additional beneficiary qualitative data was collected through the use of targeted focus group discussions (FGDs) for key groups including women, entrepreneurs, and IDPs. Other stakeholders interviewed include Job Placement Agencies (JPAs), Foras training partners, and employers, as well as key informant interviews with select Foras program personnel.

Table 3: Evaluation Design Matrix

QUESTIONS and SUB-QUESTIONS	MEASURES and INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES	SAMPLE SIZE	DATA ANALYSIS PLAN	INSTRUMENTS
1) To what extent was Foras' Technology and information driven approach effective in achieving project goals given the target population?		Foras M&E documents	N/A	Comparison of targets and actuals	N/A
	See indicators for questions 1.i and 1.ii	See data sources for questions 1.i and 1.ii	See sample sizes for questions 1.i and 1.ii	See data analysis plans for questions 1.i and 1.ii	See instruments for questions 1.i and 1.ii
		Also refer to data sources for question 2 (IDPs) and question 3 (women)	IDP and women beneficiaries will be disaggregated from total populations	See data analysis plans for questions 1.i and 1.ii with emphasis on special targeted populations	See instruments for questions 1.i and 1.ii with sections designed for targeted populations

		Desk review 7 background documents and other secondary sources			
1.i) To what extent have employment agencies adopted the technologies and recruitment methods that were introduced by Foras?	% of employment agencies reporting adoption and consistent use of Foras technology tools	Employment agency/COO interview	25 JPAs/COOs in 4 regions	Content analysis of interviews	COO agency interview guide
	% of employment agencies/COO expressing high satisfaction by rating 4/5 or higher (Likert) with at least 5 out of 7 program attributes	Employment agency/COO interview	25 JPAs/COOs in 4 regions	Content analysis of interviews	COO agency interview guide
	% of employers expressing satisfaction (e.g., see above)	Employer	30 employers in 4 regions	Content analysis of interviews	Employer interview guide
	% of beneficiaries expressing satisfaction	Beneficiaries	• > 150 (surveys) • > 100 (20 focus groups)	• Frequency analysis • Content analysis of FDGs	• Beneficiary survey • Beneficiary focus group guides
		KIIs w/Foras program staff and core partner staff	10 interviews including a total of approx. 20 staff among program partners	Content analysis of interviews	Semi-structured interview/FGD guide for Foras and core partner staff
1.ii) How effective was project training, both instructor led and online, in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops?	% job placements for training participants	• Project employment tracker • Interviews with training participants	Project employment tracker count	Frequency analysis	Project employment tracker
	% job placements for training participants	• Training participant list • Interviews with training participants	N/A	Frequency analysis	Trainer participant list
		Training organization staff	20 trainers and 5 trainer directors/ad ministrators	Content analysis of interviews	Interview/FGD guide for training staff

		Foras program staff		Content analysis of interviews	KII w/Foras program staff
		Employment agency staff interviews		Content analysis	Employment agency/COO interview guide
		Beneficiaries	• > 150 (surveys) • > 100 (20 focus groups) • > 100 KIIs	• Frequency analysis • Content analysis of FDGs and KIIs	• Beneficiary survey • FDG guide • KII guide
	% Foras users accessing e-learning % completing an e-learning module % people receiving e-learning certification	E-learning staff	3 (staff from FHI 360, Silatech, Microsoft , IMC)	Content analysis of interviews	• E-learning staff interview guide • Beneficiary survey
2) How effective was Foras' approach to serving the employment and employability needs of IDPs with regard to daily and short term jobs?	% job placements for IDP participants	Employment agency/COO interviews	25 JPAs/COOs in 4 regions	Content analysis of interviews	COO agency interview guide
		Project employment tracker	Project employment tracker count	Frequency analysis	Project employment tracker
		IDP beneficiaries	>150 (Survey- IDP responses)	Frequency analysis	Beneficiary survey
	% of IDPs expressing high satisfaction by rating 4/5 or higher (Likert) with at least 5 out of 7 program attributes	• IDP beneficiary FGDs • IDP beneficiary interviews		Content analysis	Interview FGD guide for beneficiaries
employment		Employment agency staff interviews		Content analysis	COO agency interview guide
training		Interviews with training organizations	20 trainers and 5 trainer directors/administrators	Content analysis	Interview/FGD guide for training staff
		IDP beneficiary FGDs		Content analysis	Interview/FGD guide for beneficiaries

		Employer interviews		Content analysis	Employer interview guide
3) How effective and consistent was Foras' application of a strategy for reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and job acquisition?	% COO/employment agency informants and employers adopting specific interventions targeted to increased women participation	• COO/employment agency interviews • Employer interviews • Foras project reports	20 agencies/COO in 4 regions	Frequency analysis/DQA	Project counts/DQA
	% women reporting specific women-friendly program attributes	• Beneficiary FGDs, with emphasis on women-only groups • Women survey informants	>5 women-only FGDs >150 (Survey- IDP responses)	Content analysis Frequency analysis	Interview/FGD guide for beneficiaries, adapted for women-only groups Beneficiary survey
		KII w/Foras program staff			
4) How could Foras' PMP have been designed to better monitor implementation progress?		• DQA results and findings • Interviews with IP staff and key stakeholders			• Document review • Employment agency interview guide • Employer interview guide • IP interview guide
		Comparison of project SOW and indicators			
		Desk review background documents and other secondary sources			

Key limitations to the evaluation methodology are related to the program's security environment. The evaluation team was able to meet with only 12 out of the 20 beneficiary focus groups that were originally included in the evaluation design matrix. Several focus group discussions were cancelled by Foras due to concern for participants' safety after nearby violent events. In addition, access to IDP camps to APM data collectors intending to conduct FGDs was more restricted than anticipated. The APM team responded to these limitations to FGDs by adding 123 individual beneficiary interviews that were not included in the original evaluation plan in order to fully capture the experience of beneficiaries.

An additional limitation was in the evaluation team's ability to identify and/or access IDPs. This was due to the inability to identify IDPs in the online beneficiary survey. And while it is clear that there are some IDPs represented through contextual responses to key questions, the numbers of IDP respondents are unknown as the evaluation determined that a direct question asking IDPs to self-identify would have been inappropriate and insensitive. APM responded to this limitation by administering a paper version of the survey to known IDPs; as a result IDPs are represented, though in relatively small numbers, again due to limited access to the IDP camps. IDPs living outside the camps were also difficult to identify, as Foras has no means to systematically identify and locate them to be surveyed or interviewed.

A key challenge, anticipated from the beginning of the evaluation, is related to the limited access that the expatriate members of the core evaluation team had for direct participation in field interviews. This was due to limitations in logistics, security concerns, and time. In response, APM relied heavily on its cadre of 10 local data collectors who, while they are seasoned field workers, faced the considerable challenges of conducting interviews with a myriad of interview instruments and stakeholders, taking notes in Arabic/Kurdish that later they transcribed into English. APM required that they complete the transcription and submit field notes on a daily basis which contributed to long days in the field.

In response to these challenges, the four core evaluation team members worked intensively with APM's data collectors throughout the evaluation in order fully capture their interview experiences. Before deployment, data collectors were provided two full days of experiential-based training, including interview best practices and detailed instruction and practice on the interview instruments/guides. English and Arabic versions of the guides were reviewed in detail and any language divergences in the questions identified by the data collectors were discussed and corrected. The data collectors were then sent into the field for one week. They returned for an additional day of training, where the core evaluation team provided feedback on their field notes. An extended round table discussion also addressed the challenges and issues that were encountered during the first week. During the remainder of the data collection period, the data collectors were closely monitored by APM's field activities coordinator who ensured daily submission of field notes, assisted with access to interview subjects, logistics, and quality control. At the end of the data collection phase, each paired team of data collectors was scheduled for an extensive one day briefing (a full day per team) with the core evaluation team in order to augment their field notes and observations and ensure that their interview experiences were completely captured and able to be utilized by the core team for the final evaluation report. The data collectors were also active participants and instrumental in the analysis of the data. After the individual debriefings, they were convened again in another full day, large group round-table discussion where initial evaluation findings identified by the core evaluation team were vetted by the data collectors for accuracy and completeness. The data collectors added context and anecdotes and shared additional findings during the discussion, which included feedback to the exit briefing presentation for USAID. Enabling active participation by the data collectors during the pre-testing, data collection, and analysis phases has resulted in a high level of confidence in the evaluation findings by QED's evaluation team.

ANNEX 4. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Quantitative Beneficiary Survey:

- 569 beneficiary respondents to survey administered online
- 66 beneficiary in-person (paper version) respondents to beneficiary survey

Qualitative beneficiary interviews:

- 123 beneficiaries interviewed in person or telephone interviews, qualitative follow up from quantitative survey respondents

Interviews with Job Placement Agency (JPA) staff:

- Baghdad catchment area- 4 JPAs
- Basra catchment area- 4 JPAs
- KRG region- 3 JPAs
- Najaf and Karbala catchment areas- 7 JPAs

Interviews with Trainers and Centers of Opportunity (COO) TOT Trainers:

- Baghdad catchment area – 8 trainers/COOs
- Basra catchment area- 4 trainers/COOs
- KRG region- 20 trainers/COOs
- Najaf and Karbala catchment areas- 9 trainers/COOs

Interviews with Foras Business Partners/Employers:

- Baghdad catchment area- 8 employers
- Basra catchment area- 19 employers
- KRG region- 6 employers
- Najaf and Karbala catchment areas- 5 employers

Key Informant Interviews with FHI 360/Foras staff:

- Don Henry, Foras Project Director
- Jon Wiebe, Chief of Party
- Sam Misenheimer, Deputy Chief of Party/ Knowledge Management Officer
- Odis Kendrick, Chief Information Officer
- Douglas Treadwell, Monitoring and Evaluation Director
- Ibtisam K. Sulttan, Women and Youth Advisor
- Ivy Shen, IDP Regional Program Officer
- Michael Rothe, Special Industries Broker

ANNEX 5. DATA AND RECORDS

(This information provided to USAID/Iraq outside of this report due to the volume and size of files.)

ANNEX 6. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

No.	Document name
Agreement	
1	AID-267-LA-13-00001 Cooperative Agreement
2	AID-267-LA-13-00001 Mod 01
3	AID-267-LA-13-00001 Mod 02
4	AID-267-LA-13-00001 Mod 03 SIGNED
5	AID-267-LA-13-00001 Mod 04 SIGNED
Training Material	
6	Foras Employer Toolkit. (Arabic. Amended)
7	Foras Employer Toolkit. (English. Amended)
8	Employer Audience. (Brochure in Arabic)
9	Employer Audience. (Brochure in English)
10	Foras Brochure Update (Arabic)
11	Foras Brochure Update_(English)
12	Go to the Job – SARHANG (English)
13	Job Seeker Audience (Brochure in Arabic)
14	Job Seeker Audience. (Brochure in English)
15	Module 3a - Writing a Cover Letter
16	Module 3b - Developing your CV
17	Module 4 - Interviewing Skills
18	Module 5 - Advice for Attending a Job Fair
19	Training of Trainers (Brochure in Arabic)
20	Training of Trainers (Brochure in English)
Signed MOU	
21	Copy of Signed MOU (Silatech, Jan 2014)
22	IMC Sub 01 Mod. 01 (Fully Executed)
23	IMC Sub 01 Mod. 02 (Fully Executed)
24	IMC Subagreement (Fully Executed)
25	Microsoft USAID MOU 09 2013 (Entire document. Signed by USAID)
26	RI Subaward (Fully Executed)
27	Silatech Grant (Fully Executed)
PMP	
28	APM Data Quality Assessment_11-12-2014
29	APM DQA Annexure C_11-12-2014
30	Foras PMP Appendix - USAID-Foras Project Performance Data Table
31	USAID-Foras Iraq Opportunities Project (PMP Final)
32	USAID-Foras Iraq Opportunities Project (PMP, Revised 09-30-2014)
Annual Reports	
33	USAID-Foras Annual Report - FY 2013

Quarterly reports	
34	USAID Mail - USAID-Foras Quarterly Report – April-June 2014
35	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - April-June Q2 2014
36	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Jan-Mar Q1 2014
37	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q1 Jan-Mar 2013
38	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q2 April-June 2013
39	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q3 July, Aug, Sept, 2014
40	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q3 July-Sept 2013
41	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q4 2014
42	USAID-Foras Quarterly Report - Q4 Oct-Dec 2013
Monthly Report	
43	2013_2 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - February 2013
44	2013_3 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - March 2013
45	2013_4 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - April 2013
46	2013_5 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - May 2013
47	2013_6 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - June 2013
48	2013_7 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - July 2013
49	2013_8 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - August 2013
50	2013_9 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - September 2013
51	2013_10 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - October 2013
52	2013_11 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - November 2013
53	2013_12 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - December 2013
54	2014_1 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - January 2014
55	2014_2 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - February 2014
56	2014_3 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - March 2014
57	2014_4USAID-Foras Monthly Report - April 2014
58	2014_5 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - May 2014
59	2014_6 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - June 2014
60	2014_8 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - August 2014
61	2014_9 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - September 2014
62	2014_10 USAID-Foras Monthly Report - October 2014
63	2014_11 USAID-Foras Performance Indicators - Monthly Progress for November 2014
Work Plan	
64	Org Chart - Ver#13_Year2
65	USAID-Foras Year 1 Workplan (Final approved revised version)
66	USAID-Foras Year 2 Work Plan V10 (January 6, 2014 with edits)
67	USAID-Foras Year 3 Work Plan (December 30, 2014)

ANNEX 7. RESEARCH TOOLS

<u>7.a Job Placement Agency Staff Interview Guide</u>

Job Placement Agency Staff Interview Guide

Background

What is the local labor market situation in your area?

Does unemployment or underemployment affect some groups more than others? (*Probe for differences in age groups, cultural/religious groups, political affiliation, gender*.)

What are the most important challenges for employers? For job seekers?

How did you first hear about the Foras program?

Please describe your experience prior to working with the Foras program. What if any, changes did the Foras program introduce?

To what extent have your methods changed as a result of program-sponsored activities?

Other than Foras-supported activities, what other types of support and resources do you provide for persons looking for jobs? For employers?

Customers, Usage Patterns, and Outcomes

Job Seeker Profiles

What are the goals that job-seeking clients come in with?

How do goals vary for the following types of customers?
- Professional and technical specialists
- Incumbent workers seeking other jobs
- Dislocated workers (IDPs)
- Low-income adults
- New entrants to the labor force (youth, women, others)
- Do you charge any fees to persons that you place in jobs? If so, please describe.

Employer Profiles

Please describe the types of employers that you work with in the local area.

How do employers hear of the services you offer?

Have you developed a marketing strategy for your employment services?

What are the most common types of jobs that your center/agency are asked to help fill?

What is the role of your agency/center in developing job leads?

How do you work with employers to assist them in filling jobs?

What is your role in supporting employer use of Foras portal/mobile app?

Do you provide training or other support for employers on self-service use of the portal? Post job opportunities on behalf of employers?

Do you charge fees to employers for any of your services? If so, please describe.

Assistance to Job Seekers

What types of services do you provide to persons looking for employment?

Describe the customer-flow process for job seekers:

What happens when a customer first comes in to the center/agency?

What happens after that?

How are customers oriented to your services in general?
Probe for tours or orientation workshops, one-on-one interviews

Staff Assistance in Job Search and Career Development

What are the specific services that you offer to job seekers?

How does a job seeker indicate their availability for work to employers?
Probe for whether the center/agency posts job seeker resumes, assists them with resume development, etc.

Portal / Mobile Application

Do you have your own job matching system in addition to Foras? If so, which do you primarily use, and under what circumstances?

How adequate are the Foras Portal job matching/job listing services in terms of

- Completeness
- Clarity
- Ease of use for diverse customers
- Quality
- Linkages to e-learning opportunities

If the organization promotes or provides self-service use of the Portal/Mobile App:
What are the typical patterns of use of the Foras portal by job seekers? By employers?

What are the specific Foras-funded tools and resources they typically use?

Can job seekers access the Foras portal from your center/agency?

How long do customers spend using online resources at your center? At home?

How long does it take an active job seeker using online services to find a job?

Does this vary by individual or job seeker type? (*Probe for educational differences, gender, socio-economic status, degree of technical experience*)

Are there any limits placed on use of online resources at your center (e.g., due to capacity constraints)?

For example, are customers limited to a certain number of minutes of use at a terminal while on site?

Do customers have to wait to use more popular services at your center/agency? Which ones? How long is the wait?

Job Matching

How specifically did your company/organization benefit from the Foras program and Foras-supported activities in terms of matching job seekers with employers?

Out of all of your placements the last year, how many received training through the Foras program? How many were women?

Did you use the standard job position profiles provided by Foras? If so, how useful were they?

How well have the placements of Foras-trained job applicants matched the skills required by employers?

Employment Outcomes

Obtain and review a copy of any report on outcomes with staff.

Describe your tracking method for job placements.

What are the decision rules regarding whether a job seeker is reported to Foras for inclusion on their employment tracking list?

What employment, wage, and retention outcomes do job seekers using your services have?

Are there any discernible differences in outcomes by major groups of job seekers? (e.g., youth, women, skilled or technical workers, non-skilled workers, dislocated workers / IDPs, incumbent workers seeking to upgrade their skills or employment opportunities, potential entrepreneurs)

What could have been done better and how in terms of job matching and skills training by the Foras Program to increase positive employment outcomes?

Meeting The Needs Of Special Populations

What are the groups that you serve that have the highest barriers to employment?

In your opinion, how accessible is your center/agency to persons with high barriers to employment? *(Probe for differences in age groups, cultural/religious groups, political affiliation, gender, displacement status, limited literacy skills, limited computer skills)*

What are the most effective strategies for placing these persons in jobs or self-employment?

Concluding questions

What are the key lessons learned?

What would you consider the best practices ideas introduced by Foras?

What have been your key challenges in implementing Foras related activities?

Assuming another program followed Foras, what would you suggest program implementers do differently?

What other suggestions would you have for improving employment-related programs such as Foras?

7b. FGD Guide for Foras Staff

Interview / FGD Guide for Staff from Implementing Partners/ Centers of Opportunity Providing Training

Background

When did you begin conducting training for the Foras program?

Are you still conducting trainings?

What type of trainings have you offered?

What is the main target group for these trainings?

Where were these training sessions offered?

Training type / content
Review training materials with training organization and request copies (digital or printed as appropriate) of training materials.

What is the content of the training that you offer as part of the program?

Has the content or delivery of these trainings changed over time since your began partnering with the program? If so, how?

If partner offers more than one type of training, or if training has changed over time, ask this question for each example:

What specific themes do you cover during the training?

How much time (hours, days) did you spend on each of these themes?

Does the training type vary in any important ways for special target groups? (e.g., women, potential entrepreneurs, IDPs, younger youth (18-24), others)

Training Delivery

Did your organization conduct similar training before partnering with Foras? If so, is the training offered under Foras different in any important ways?

In your organization, what are the most important qualifications for selecting trainers for your workshops?

To what extent have you been able to recruit trainers with the requisite profile?

Has staff turnover been a problem? If so, how?

Planning, design, and training of trainers

How, if at all, was your organization involved in the planning and preparation for training?

What kind of preparation did your organization conduct to prepare for training?

What types of input did the Foras program provide your organization in terms of training curriculum development? In terms of training of trainers?

Probe: Did you use your own training materials? Modify training materials provided by the project?

How well suited were the training materials for the needs of your training participants? What changes would you suggest to either the training process or teaching materials?

What other kind of guidance did Foras project staff provide you as to how to prepare job seekers for employment?

Portal / Mobile Applications

Did the Foras program provide training on its web-based and mobile applications for your staff?

Initial training and orientation to Portal/Mobile Applications

If staff from the organization received training:

When was the first training conducted?

How and where was the training conducted?

What aspects of the portal/mobile app were most emphasized?

Probe for registration, job posting, CV posting, job-matching, accessing community and other job resources, online learning, certification, day-labor, etc.

Follow-up or further training on Portal/Mobile Applications

How, if at all, does your organization learn about changes and updates to the portal/mobile apps? How are these changes communicated to trainers?

Have there been follow-up trainings on the portal/mobile app? Describe.

Probe for how, if at all, changes were introduced to the system.

How appropriate are the portal / mobile app systems for your target population?

What aspects of the technology and mobile application system are most useful for the groups you serve? Which aspects are least useful?

Follow-up, monitoring and tracking trainee progress

After a person has received initial training from your organization, what other types of services do you offer?

Probe for:
Other training activities
Counseling
Mentoring
CV/resume review
Assistance with accessing the portal/mobile app and/or other sites with job listings
Promoting networking with colleagues and/or other trainees
Job referrals
Job placement

Which of these services are most typically accessed by persons that have received training?

How was this assistance provided? (one-on-one counseling, assistance with job search, role playing for employment interviewing, other?)

How, if at all, do you document these post-training services?

After training, how often did staff typically meet with the trainees or workshop participants to provide internship and career support?

What, if any, linkages were provided to participants with recruiting firms? How often was this done?

Job Placement

For organizations indicating that they provide post-training services

Do you track or monitor the employment status of persons that have received your training? If so, how?

How many persons have received training through your organization that was sponsored by Foras?

Of that number, how many were placed in new jobs? How many persons improved their employment situation?

How would you rate the effectiveness of your training program in increasing job placements for those who completed the various courses and workshops offered?

What types of other support would training participants require to further increase their chances to get jobs or improve their employment situation?

Special target groups

How, if at all, do the employability training needs of women differ from those of men?

What, if any, strategies have you used to address these differences in needs?

How effective were these strategies and why?

If organization respondents indicated previously that they work with other target groups (e.g., potential entrepreneurs, IDPs, youth) probe for approaches and effectiveness.

Concluding questions

In your assessment, what elements of the Foras project had the greatest impact in terms of improving participant employability and potential integration into the job market? Explain.

What lesson have you learned from the program that could inform future employment training programming?

What, if any, mechanisms are in place to ensure the sustainability of the program training activities?

7c. Interview Guide for Entrepreneurship Focus Group

1) What is your business or your idea to start a business?
   - Did you have experience before you started the business?

2) What Foras entrepreneurship events, or training did you participate in?
   - Business plan competition, business plan training, other entrepreneurship training
   - How did you learn about the training or event?

3) Can you please give me your opinion about your training experience?
   - Did you enjoy the training?
   - What is your opinion of the trainer?
   - What could the trainer have done differently to make it better for you?
   - What did you learn?
   - What can you do now that you could not do before the training?
   - What skills or topics were missing from the training that you wish were included?
   - Would you have been able to start or grow your business without the Foras training?

4) Did you register on the Foras portal? Did you do any online training using the portal? If yes, tell me about your experience with the online training.
   - What training modules did you do online?
   - What was your experience using the Foras portal for training? Was it easy to use, did you have any difficulty with following the training module?
   - Were they useful?
   - Were they easy or difficult? Why?
   - Were the training modules long enough, what was missing that you wish was included?
   - What training modules would you add if you could?
   - Which is better, classroom training or online training? Why?

5) Did you use the training to help start or grow your business?
   - What skills did Foras teach you in the trainings or online that you use?
   - Are there things that you still need to learn to feel confident that your business will succeed? What are they?

6) What additional training would be useful to you in the future to help you succeed at your business?
   - Examples: getting a loan, book keeping, financial management, marketing, advertising, customer relations, licensing, hiring employees

7) **** VERY IMPORTANT! What is different for women who have their own businesses compared with men who have their own businesses?
   - Is it easier or more difficult for women to have their own businesses? Why?
   - Would you prefer to have your own successful business or have a job with a salary? Why?
   - What could Foras do differently to make it easier for women to receive entrepreneurship training or participate in entrepreneurship events?

- What could Foras do differently to encourage women to start their own businesses?
- Are there other challenges that you have experienced in starting or growing your business?

8) Do you have the funding that you need to start or grow your business? Have you received any loans, grants or other assistance?
   - Examples: family or friends, grant or prize, bank loan, microfinance loan, credit from suppliers.
   - Have you tried to get a loan from a bank or microfinance institution?
   - What was your experience in trying to get a loan?

9) Did anyone from Foras follow-up with you further advise you?
   - What help did you get from Foras after your training or entrepreneurship event?

10) What advice would you give to the Foras managers that would make the program better for you?
    - Examples: Additional training in entrepreneurship, assistance with getting a loan, special skills training.

7d. Interview Guide for Foras/Relief International Entrepreneurship (EVIE) Participants

1) Did you participate in Foras (EVIE) entrepreneurship training?

2) What was your business idea to start a business?
   - Did you have experience before you started the business?
   - Do you currently have a business or

3) What Foras entrepreneurship events, or training did you participate in?
   - Business plan competition, business plan training, other entrepreneurship training
   - How did you learn about the training or event?

4) Can you please give me your opinion about your training experience?
   - Did you enjoy the training?
   - What is your opinion of the trainer?
   - What could the trainer have done differently to make it better for you?
   - What did you learn?
   - What can you do now that you could not do before the training?
   - What skills or topics were missing from the training that you wish were included?
   - Would you have been able to start or grow your business without the Foras training?

5) Did you register on the Foras portal? Did you do any online training using the portal? If yes, tell me about your experience with the online training.
   - What training modules did you do online?
   - What was your experience using the Foras portal for training? Was it easy to use, did you have any difficulty with following the training module?
   - Were they useful?
   - Were they easy or difficult? Why?
   - Were the training modules long enough, what was missing that you wish was included?
   - What training modules would you add if you could?
   - Which is better, classroom training or online training? Why?

6) Did you use the training to help start or grow your business?
   - What skills did Foras teach you in the trainings or online that you use?
   - Are there things that you still need to learn to feel confident that your business will succeed? What are they?

7) What additional training would be useful to you in the future to help you succeed at your business?
   - Examples: getting a loan, book keeping, financial management, marketing, advertising, customer relations, licensing, hiring employees

8) ****** VERY IMPORTANT**! What is different for women who have their own businesses compared with men who have their own businesses?
   - Is it easier or more difficult for women to have their own businesses? Why?
   - Would you prefer to have your own successful business or have a job with a salary? Why?
   - What could Foras do differently to make it easier for women to receive entrepreneurship training or participate in entrepreneurship events?
   - What could Foras do differently to encourage women to start their own businesses?
   - Are there other challenges that you have experienced in starting or growing your business?

9) Do you have the funding that you need to start or grow your business? Have you received any loans, grants or other assistance?
   - Examples: family or friends, grant or prize, bank loan, microfinance loan, credit from suppliers
   - Have you tried to get a loan from a bank or microfinance institution?
   - What was your experience in trying to get a loan?

10) Did anyone from Foras follow-up with you further advise you?
   - What help did you get from Foras after your training or entrepreneurship event?

11) What advice would you give to the Foras managers that would make the program better for you?
   - Examples: Additional training in entrepreneurship, assistance with getting a loan, special skills training

7e. Key Informant Guide for Employer Interviews

Background

Please briefly describe the current economic situation in the areas/regions that your company operates.

To what extent is there a match between the skills of workers in your local area and the demands of your organization? What gaps are there?

Please describe your experience prior to working with the Foras program *(alternatively, insert name of Foras employment agency partner)* with employer recruiting and employee recruiting.

What if any, changes did the Foras program (or relevant employment agency) have on your recruitment process?

How, if at all was your organization's hiring practices affected over the course of your participation with Foras?

How specifically did your company/organization benefit from the Foras program and Foras-supported activities?

Out of all of your new hires in the last year, how many received training through the Foras program? How many were women?

How well have the placements of Foras-trained job applicants matched the skills required by your organization?

What could have been done better and how in terms of skills training or job matching?

To what extent have your recruitment methods changed as a result of program-sponsored activities?
Probe for changes that were introduced or influenced by Foras.

In addition to job matching, what other kinds of support did the Foras program provide? What could have been done better and how?

Was there a charge to the company for services provided by job placement agency (JPA)? Was there a charge to the employee?

In the future, would you be willing to pay a similar service charge if you interacted directly with Foras?

Portal / Mobile App

How many persons have you placed via the Foras portal since you began working with Foras (or agency)?

How would you rate the usefulness of the portal for your organization?

Concluding questions

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of Foras' (and local partners') approach to serving your employment needs?

How did the person(s) you employed benefit from the program?

What lessons have you learned that you think would be valuable for employment programs in the future in Iraq?

Assuming another program followed Foras, what would you suggest they do differently?

7f. Interview Guide for Foras Entrepreneurship Participants (workshops, EVIE, online)

Beneficiary Name: Gender: M F
Phone NO.:
Status:
Call time:
Interviewer Name:

1) Background information:

2) Did you participate in Foras entrepreneurship training? Please describe your experience in detail:

3) Did you use the entrepreneurship knowledge in your bossiness? please describe in detail:

4) What you want change in your experience with Foras?

5) What you want add to Foras training? What additional training would be useful to you in the future to help you succeed at your business?

6) What is different for women who have their own businesses compared with men who have their own businesses?

7g. Participant Survey / FGD Framework

This survey framework has been developed for both online surveys to be administered to registered Foras Portal users. The framework is also designed so that various elements can be used in the administration of in-person surveys and as a basis for beneficiary focus groups as part of the field data collection.

The framework consists of four major sections designed to measure: 1) uses of and satisfaction with the Foras portal; 2) attendance in and satisfaction with Foras-funded training; 3) employment and other outcomes; and 4) outcomes related to entrepreneurship training. The survey includes screening questions that will allow survey respondents to skip to the relevant sections.

Section 1: Foras Portal

Our records indicate that you registered for the Foras portal. What did you use the portal or mobile applications for? (Multiple responses allowed)

Accessing job postings *(screening question for job posting rating)*

Posting my resume *(screening question for resume response)*

Online training or education *(screening question for E-Learning module)*

Other (specify)

How did you usually connect to the portal (multiple responses)?

By computer from my home
At a job placement agency (JPA)
At a center of opportunity (COO)
By computer at another location
Using a mobile phone

How often, if at all, did you experience inability in connecting to the portal or mobile applications? (Likert scale—often, sometimes, no difficulty)

For those who have experienced difficulty in connecting: What were the principal reasons for the inability to connect to the portal? (Multiple responses may be selected.)

Lack of access to computer or mobile phone
Insufficient airtime
Internet network problems
Other (specify)

In general, how would you describe your ability to use the Internet or mobile applications? (Likert scale—from highly computer literate to poor).

How often, if at all, did you experience difficulties in using the portal or mobile applications? (Likert scale—often, sometimes, no difficulty).

For those who have experienced difficulty in using the system: What were the principal reasons for the inability to connect to the portal? (Multiple responses may be selected.)

Difficulty in navigating the portal

Lack of access to computer or mobile phone

Insufficient airtime

Internet network problems

Other (specify)

For those who have experienced difficulty in using the system: When you had difficulty with the portal, what did you do? (Multiple responses may be selected.)

Contacted the Foras call center for technical support

Submitted a request for support online / through mobile app

Request technical support from staff member in person

Please rate your experience with the Foras portal in terms of the following:

Design, organization and ease of use

How well was the Foras portal organized in terms of the following? (Likert scale/DK)

Ease of use
Ease of navigation
Search capabilities

Usefulness

How would you rate the *relevance* of the following elements of the portal given your situation? (Likert scale/NA/DK)

Insert relevant categories from screening questions (job postings, online training)

For all that indicated having used the Portal after registration: What suggestions would you have for improving the Portal? (text)

----End Portal section----

Training/Events

Screening question: Did you attend any Foras sponsored training workshop or event?

Yes
No (skip training / events section)

Section 2: Training / Events

What type of Foras sponsored training workshop or event did you attend? (multiple responses allowed from a dropdown menu of events or training types).

Orientation/trainings on work in the private sector
Women Work Training
Job search skills
Entrepreneurship *(also used as screening question for section 4: Entrepreneurship)*
Financial skills / literacy
Vocational education
Other __________

What was the duration of the event or workshop? (Dropdown menu for each of the events or training workshops attended (e.g., one day or less; 2-3 days; 3-6 days; more than one week.)

Events only participants

How would you rate the usefulness of the event? (Likert scale for those responding attendance a one-day or one-time event)

Training participants

You noted that you participated in training in (insert training type).

To what extent did Foras training workshops help you: (Likert scale/NA/DK for each category allowed)

Improve your economic prospects
Improve your employment options
Improve your self-confidence regarding ability to work
Improve your interviewing skills
Find employment
Obtain a better job
Supplement income through self-employment
Other (text)

What, if any, element, topic, skill, or concept would you add to the training program that would have better helped you in your current circumstance?

I would not have added anything
I would have added (specify, text)___________________________________

Had the workshops not been offered free of charge by Foras, would you have been willing to pay a reasonable charge for them?

------End Training section-------

Section 3: Outcomes

For all indicating that they used Foras portal for accessing job postings: You indicated earlier that you used the Foras portal to access job postings. Were you able to obtain an interview from any of the employers posting jobs on the Foras portal?

Yes

No (skip next questions on interviews and offers of employment)

For those indicating receipt of Foras-sponsored training and indicating "yes" to question above. How well did the Foras training you received prepare you for the interview? (Likert scale)

Did you receive an offer of employment as a result?

Yes

No (skip next question)

Did you accept the employment offer?

Yes

No

For those indicating that they posted screening question response "yes" on resumes: You indicated earlier that you used the Foras to post your resume.

Did you receive any response from employers as a result of your resume posting?

Yes

No (skip next questions)

Did you have an interview with the employer?

Yes

No (skip next questions)

For those indicating "yes" on question above and indicated having received Foras training:

How well did the Foras training prepare you for the interview (Likert scale)

Yes

No (skip next question)

Did you accept the employment offer?

Yes

No

Have you worked outside the home at any time during the last twelve months?

Yes______
No ______ (skip remainder of section)

Did you receive a salary or remuneration for this work?

Yes
No (skip employment question in sub-section below)

Did you work outside the home for pay last month?

Yes (skip following question)
No (skip to question on activities other than remunerated pay)

About how many weeks have you been without any paid work?

Fewer than 10
10-19
20-29
30-39
40 or more

In your current or last employment, were you:

Self-employed
Employed / in a salaried or contractual job
Work for a family business
Internship / apprenticeship
Other (specify) __________

How would you best describe your last or current job? Is it: (If more than one job, base response on the job where you work the most hours.)

Permanent (staff position)
Temporary/Contractual
Seasonal / Occasional, by hours or days
An Internship
Other (specify)

In your last or current job, how many hours did/do you work for pay during a typical week?

Fewer than 10
10-19
20-29
30-39
40 or more

Given your current situation, if you had the chance, would you like to work for pay?

More hours
Fewer hours
About the same

Do you receive the agreed-upon level of pay for your work? (Likert responses)

Are you paid for your work on time? (Likert responses)

Do you receive any of the following benefits or bonuses as part of your current or last job? (Select all that apply)

Vacation
Retirement
Health insurance
Year-end bonus
Performance bonus
Unemployment insurance

Which statement most accurately reflects your level of satisfaction with your current or most recent job?

I was/am highly dissatisfied with the job/work
I was/am somewhat dissatisfied with my job/work
I was/am somewhat satisfied with my job/work
I was/am highly satisfied with my job/work

Activities other than remunerated pay

For those indicating that they had not worked during the last month:

You indicated above that you did not work in the last month. What are you doing currently? (Single response based on where you use most of your time.)

Housework/Chores
Looking for Work
Studying
Other Activity (specify)____________

How hard do you think it will be to find a job in the future?

Very easy
Easy
Difficult
Very difficult

--------End Employment Section--------

Section 4: Entrepreneurship

For those indicating that they receive entrepreneurship training based on screening question in section 2: Training)

Did you have any previous experience related to your current business or other income generating activity?

Yes
No (skip following question)

Which of the following best describes your situation? (Multiple responses allowed)

Family members have already worked in a similar or related type of occupation
Friends have already worked in a similar or related occupation
I have already worked in a similar or related type of occupation

Why did you decide to start your business/IGA? (Multiple responses allowed)

I was unable to find a full-time or permanent job
To supplement my personal or family income
Because I found the activity interesting / fulfilling
Other (specify)____________

Which of the following activities have you undertaken to start your business? (Multiple selections allowed, unless respondent chooses "none".)

Set it up with the help of Foras
Set it up with the help of someone who knows about my business ideas
Requested a business loan
Received training about the topic
Purchased materials, supplies
Hired workers
Saved money on my own
Saved money with a group/associates
None

What sector is your business in? (One selection)

Trade/commerce
Industry
Service
Agriculture production (including livestock)
Construction
Other (specify, text) __________

Please describe your business or enterprise (text)

Do any family members work with you in this business/IGA?

Yes
No (skip following question)

Do you currently have any employees who are not family members?

Yes
No

If yes, how many? (dropdown menu: 1, 2, 3, 4 or more)

Is your business registered with the Government?

Yes
No

How many hours per week do you typically work in this job?

_______ hours

How much did you earn last month?

Monthly Earning: ________________ (Iraqi dinars)

How did you primarily fund your business/IGA?

From my own savings
From a gift or loan from a family member
From a gift or loan from a friend
From a loan from a bank, money-lender or cooperative
From a grant or gift from person other than family or friend

Supplemental background questions

Some of these fields will be included as appropriate and/or if not adequately captured during registration process.

Name
Sex
Religious affiliation
IDP status
Contact information
Date of birth
Marital status

Besides yourself, how many other people live in your household? If you live alone, please indicate “0”. ____________

For respondents indicating one or more other persons in the household: How many of the above are children below the age of 18? __________

How many people in your household are working for pay outside the home? ____________

Estimated family income

What is your highest level of formal education? (Select only one option.)

Primary School
Middle School
Secondary/High School
Technical College/Institute
University/Tertiary Education
Postgraduate Education
Other (specify)_________

Name of institution where highest level of education was completed.

Major field of study (for secondary and tertiary levels of education)

Annex 8. Arabic translation of USAID/Iraq Foras Project Final Performance Evaluation Report

(This information provided outside of this report due to the volume and size of files.)

ANNEX 9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENTS

Joseph Kotun, Team Leader / Evaluation Expert

Consulting Agreement for Non-Personal Services, Version 1 (12.16.14)
Joseph Kotun, The Advancing Performance Management Project
Page 28 of 29

Annex 5

Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation

Instructions:

Evaluations of USAID projects will be undertaken so that they are not subject to the perception or reality of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest.[1] *For external evaluations, all evaluation team members will provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated.*[2]

Evaluators of USAID projects have a responsibility to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be impartial and will be viewed as impartial by third parties. Evaluators and evaluation team members are to disclose all relevant facts regarding real or potential conflicts of interest that could lead reasonable third parties with knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances to conclude that the evaluator or evaluation team member is not able to maintain independence and, thus, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues associated with conducting and reporting the work. Operating Unit leadership, in close consultation with the Contracting Officer, will determine whether the real or potential conflict of interest is one that should disqualify an individual from the evaluation team or require recusal by that individual from evaluating certain aspects of the project(s).

In addition, if evaluation team members gain access to proprietary information of other companies in the process of conducting the evaluation, then they must agree with the other companies to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.[3]

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate family or close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant/material though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Joseph Kotun
Title	Team Leader/Evaluation Expert
Organization	The QED Group, LLC
Evaluation Position	☒Team leader ☐ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	Contract No. AID-267-C-13-00001
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s)*	USAID/Iraq's Foras (Opportunities in Arabic)

1 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 8); USAID Contract Information Bulletin 99-17; and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 9.5, Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and Subpart 3.10, Contractor Code of Business Ethics and Conduct.
2 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 11)
3 FAR 9.505-4(b)

and award number(s), if applicable)	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☐X No [check appropriate box]
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* *1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* *3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* *4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.*	[Disclose facts if applicable]

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	Joseph Kotun
Date	February 12, 2015

Annex 5

Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation

Instructions:

Evaluations of USAID projects will be undertaken so that they are not subject to the perception or reality of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest.[1] *For external evaluations, all evaluation team members will provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated.*[2]

Evaluators of USAID projects have a responsibility to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be impartial and will be viewed as impartial by third parties. Evaluators and evaluation team members are to disclose all relevant facts regarding real or potential conflicts of interest that could lead reasonable third parties with knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances to conclude that the evaluator or evaluation team member is not able to maintain independence and, thus, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues associated with conducting and reporting the work. Operating Unit leadership, in close consultation with the Contracting Officer, will determine whether the real or potential conflict of interest is one that should disqualify an individual from the evaluation team or require recusal by that individual from evaluating certain aspects of the project(s).

In addition, if evaluation team members gain access to proprietary information of other companies in the process of conducting the evaluation, then they must agree with the other companies to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.[3]

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate family or close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant/material though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Michael Midling
Title	Workforce Development Expert
Organization	The QED Group, LLC
Evaluation Position	☐ Team leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	Contract No. AID-267-C-13-00001
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)*	USAID/Iraq's Foras (Opportunities in Arabic)

1 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 8); USAID Contract Information Bulletin 99-17; and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)
2 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 11)
3 FAR 9.505-4(b)

I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ No [check appropriate box]
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* *1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* *3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* *4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.*	[Disclose facts if applicable]

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	[Non-PSC's signature] Michael Midling Digitally signed by Michael Midling DN: cn=Michael Midling, o, ou, email=mikemidling@yahoo.com, c=US Date: 2015.02.18 09:26:15 -08'00'
Date	[Insert Date]

Annex 5

Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation

Instructions:

Evaluations of USAID projects will be undertaken so that they are not subject to the perception or reality of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest.[1] *For external evaluations, all evaluation team members will provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated.*[2]

Evaluators of USAID projects have a responsibility to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be impartial and will be viewed as impartial by third parties. Evaluators and evaluation team members are to disclose all relevant facts regarding real or potential conflicts of interest that could lead reasonable third parties with knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances to conclude that the evaluator or evaluation team member is not able to maintain independence and, thus, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues associated with conducting and reporting the work. Operating Unit leadership, in close consultation with the Contracting Officer, will determine whether the real or potential conflict of interest is one that should disqualify an individual from the evaluation team or require recusal by that individual from evaluating certain aspects of the project(s).

In addition, if evaluation team members gain access to proprietary information of other companies in the process of conducting the evaluation, then they must agree with the other companies to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.[3]

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate family or close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant/material though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Charles James Vokral
Title	Entrepreneurship Expert
Organization	The QED Group, LLC
Evaluation Position	☐ Team leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	Contract No. AID-267-C-13-00001
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s)*	USAID/Iraq's Foras (Opportunities in Arabic)

1 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 8); USAID Contract Information Bulletin 99-17; and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 9.5, Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and Subpart 3.10, Contractor Code of Business Ethics and Conduct.
2 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 11)
3 FAR 9.505-4(b)

and award number(s), if applicable)	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☑ No [check appropriate box]
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* *1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* *3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* *4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.*	[Disclose facts if applicable] N/A

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	[Non-PSC's signature] Charles J. Vokral
Date	[Insert Date] 14 Feb 2015

Consulting Agreement for Non-Personal Services, Version 1 (12.16.14)
Name: Mohammed Talal Mawlood; Contract #: AID-267-C-13-00001; Work Order # N/A; Activity # N/A
Page 26 of 27

Annex 5

Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation

Instructions:

Evaluations of USAID projects will be undertaken so that they are not subject to the perception or reality of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest.[1] For external evaluations, all evaluation team members will provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated.[2]

Evaluators of USAID projects have a responsibility to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be impartial and will be viewed as impartial by third parties. Evaluators and evaluation team members are to disclose all relevant facts regarding real or potential conflicts of interest that could lead reasonable third parties with knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances to conclude that the evaluator or evaluation team member is not able to maintain independence and, thus, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues associated with conducting and reporting the work. Operating Unit leadership, in close consultation with the Contracting Officer, will determine whether the real or potential conflict of interest is one that should disqualify an individual from the evaluation team or require recusal by that individual from evaluating certain aspects of the project(s).

In addition, if evaluation team members gain access to proprietary information of other companies in the process of conducting the evaluation, then they must agree with the other companies to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.[3]

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate family or close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant/material though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Mohammed Talal Mawlood
Title	Local Expert
Organization	The QED Group, LLC
Evaluation Position	☐ Team leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	Contract No. AID-267-C-13-00001
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s)*	USAID/Iraq's Foras (Opportunities in Arabic)

1 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 8); USAID Contract Information Bulletin 99-17; and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 9.5. Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and Subpart 3.10. Contractor Code of Business Ethics and Conduct.
2 USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 11)
3 FAR 9.505-4(b)

and award number(s), if applicable)	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ No [check appropriate box]
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* *1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* *3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* *4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* *6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.*	[Disclose facts if applicable]

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	Mohammed Talal
Date	February 21,2015

ANNEX 10. STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCES

There were no differences among the team members in the findings, conclusions, or recommendations related to this evaluation.

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523
Tel: (202) 712-0000
Fax: (202) 216-3524
www.usaid.gov