
Iraq

Joint ministerial evaluation of Germany's civil engagement in Iraq

Summary of the report on the joint ministerial evaluation of the engagement by the Federal Foreign Office (AA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Iraq

2014 - 2019



Photo: Discussion with citizens and Iraqi leaders live from destroyed Mosul in June 2018

Submitted to:

Federal Foreign Office (AA) and
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

11013 Berlin

21.11.2021

Contact persons

**German Institute for
Development Evaluation (DEval)**

Dr. Stefan Leiderer
stefan.leiderer@deval.org
+49 (0) 228 336907 – 940

GFA Consulting Group GmbH

Tomas Keilbach
tomas.keilbach@gfa-group.de
+49 (0) 40 60306 – 180

Iraq

Joint ministerial evaluation of Germany's civil engagement in Iraq

Summary of the report on the joint ministerial
evaluation of the engagement by the Federal Foreign
Office (AA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Iraq

Authors:

GFA: Gregor B.M. Meiering (Team Leader), Emma Cain, Dr. Vera Hennefeld,
Petra Scheuermann, Tilman Welte
DEval: Christoph Hartmann (Team Leader), Ruben Wedel (Team Leader), Marlene
vom Hofe, Maren Weeger, Line Winterhoff

The present summary of the report on the joint ministerial evaluation of the engagement by the Federal Foreign Office (AA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Iraq presents the cross-ministry findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It was drafted by a specially constituted working group consisting of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) and a consortium led by GFA Consulting Group GmbH (GFA). In addition to the joint ministerial report, two ministry-specific reports were prepared for the AA and the BMZ, in which aspects specific to each ministry are discussed at further length. The following Executive Summary is released for publication.

1. POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

Over recent decades the German government has steadily increased the frequency and scale of its engagement in fragile contexts and is likely to continue to do so in the future. One such context is Iraq, where the German government has been engaged since 2014 to help end the dominance of the terrorist organisation known as Islamic State (IS), rebuild basic infrastructure, overcome fragility and strengthen the country's statehood. The German government's engagement in Iraq is broad in scope. It encompasses both foreign and development policy approaches and both civilian and military aspects of security. Since 2014 these have been supported with high financial inputs (equivalent to USD 2.7 bn)¹ budgeted across several ministries, principally the Federal Foreign Office (AA), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry of Defence (BMVg).

In order to address different policy sectors and apply their various instruments effectively, coherently and efficiently in Iraq, the German government has promoted the implementation of an integrated, joint ministerial approach. In accordance with international agreements ("New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States")² as well as German policy requirements (guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace")³ and in light of the discourse about the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus)⁴, the German government aspires to have its ministries act in concert and coordinate their strategic planning and steering jointly.

To strengthen the necessary joint learning for this purpose, in 2019 the AA and the BMZ decided to initiate a joint evaluation of their engagement in Iraq. This means that for the first time since 2011, and for the first time ever at a strategic level, the engagement of both ministries is examined jointly within the scope of one evaluation. This decision is based on the understanding that coordination refers not only to planning and steering, but also to institutional learning and reviewing the achievement of objectives. Against this backdrop, the pilot nature of the joint ministerial approach tested in this evaluation means that it generates important experience for future joint evaluation activities of the two ministries.

2. SUBJECT, OBJECTIVE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

The subject of this evaluation is the engagement of the AA and the BMZ in Iraq from 2014 to 2019. The evaluation focuses on selected work areas and budget lines of the two ministries, amounting to a total of EUR 2.1 bn (cf. Figure 1). For the Federal Foreign Office (with an EUR 800 million share) these consist of humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention, stabilisation and post-conflict rehabilitation, and foreign cultural relations and education policy (*Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik* – AKBP). For the BMZ (with a EUR 1.3 billion share), the budget lines in question are "Transitional development assistance" (TDA, covering crisis management, reconstruction and infrastructure), the Special Initiative on Displacement (SI Displacement, tackling root causes of

¹ OECD: Creditor Reporting System, 2021

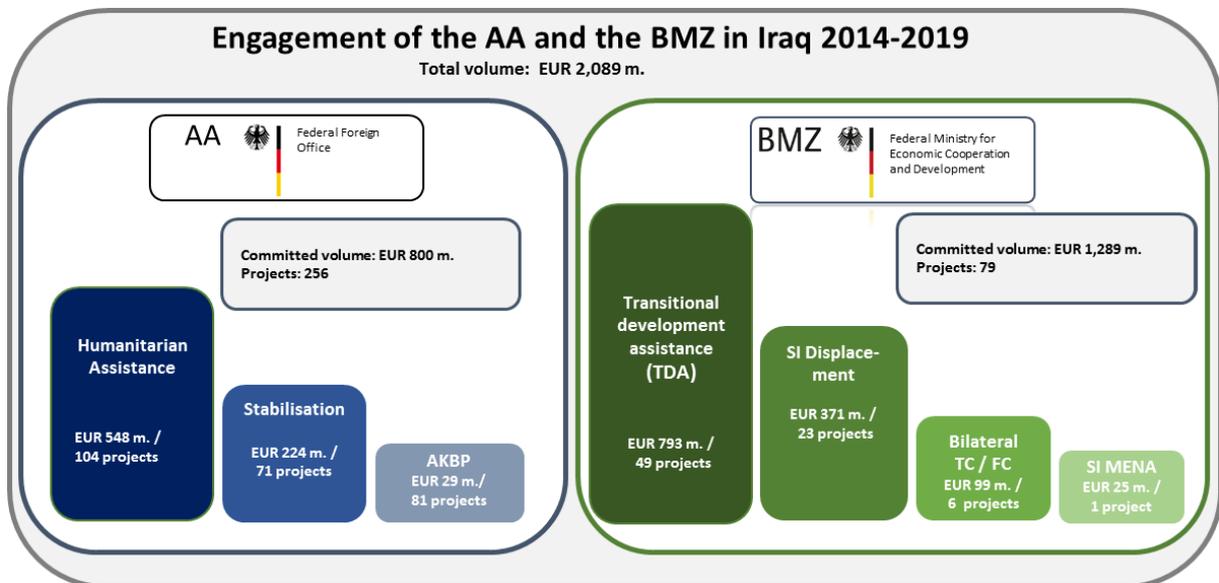
² EU: New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, 2015

³ Federal Foreign Office: Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace. Federal Government of Germany Guidelines, 2017

⁴ OECD: DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, 2020

displacement), and Bilateral Technical and Financial Cooperation (TC and FC).⁵ At the same time, the extent and quality of the coordination and cooperation between the two ministries is another important subject of the evaluation.

Figure 1: AA and BMZ engagement in Iraq (2014–2019)



Source: own presentation based on the portfolio data provided by AA and BMZ.

A joint spending review for 2017/2018 on the AA and BMZ policy areas of “Humanitarian Assistance and Transitional Development Assistance, including the interfaces Crisis Prevention, Crisis Response, Stabilisation and Development Cooperation” showed that the work remits and policy areas of the AA and the BMZ are sometimes difficult to demarcate, partly due to differing understandings of key concepts. While the AA’s remit for humanitarian assistance and AKBP and the BMZ’s mandate for Bilateral Technical Cooperation (TC) and Bilateral Financial Cooperation (FC) are clear, stabilisation is an area that requires regular conceptual clarification, which this evaluation neither intends nor is able to provide. For an understanding of the AA’s and the BMZ’s engagement in Iraq, an important foundation was laid in the German government guidelines adopted in 2017, which declares stabilisation to be one of the German government’s objectives when dealing with violent conflicts. This calls for integrated cross-ministry approaches; what is more, it can only be achieved by making flexible and coordinated use of foreign policy, development policy and security policy measures depending on the particular needs. However, the period considered for the evaluation also includes the period prior to the adoption of the guidelines, during which the thematic elaboration of stabilisation in Iraq was substantially defined and co-shaped by the Federal Foreign Office as part of its engagement in the Working Group on Stabilization (WGoS), the Stabilization Task Force (STF) and the Steering Committee of the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS)⁶. The Federal Foreign Office and the BMZ also supported the UNDP FFS financially, and did so on a coordinated and complementary basis.

The evaluation’s overall objective is to produce an independent and comprehensive analysis and assessment for the purpose of joint institutional learning, in Iraq and – where possible – for other crisis situations. Beyond this purpose, the findings are intended to support the German government’s accountability to the Bundestag and to contribute to the transparency of Germany’s engagement in Iraq. The primary addressees of the evaluation are the two ministries.

⁵ The SI MENA budget line was also material to the BMZ evaluation. However, just one project was financed during the period under review, the implementation of which only began in December 2019. For that reason, this budget line was not a focus of the evaluation.

⁶ The BMZ supported this international engagement from 2015 onwards through financial contributions to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization.

Hence, at the political level, the evaluation is fundamentally for the direct benefit of the AA and the BMZ, and more broadly also for the parliamentary sphere. The findings are also intended to be useful for the implementation partners and intermediary organisations as well as a wider specialist readership.

In order to fulfil the strategic and joint ministerial objectives formulated above, this evaluation is guided by six key questions which refer to the criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- A. **Relevance:** Did the AA and the BMZ do the right thing in Iraq?
- B. **Effectiveness:** Did the AA and the BMZ attain their short- and medium-term objectives and achieve positive effects?
- C. **Long-term impacts:** Did the AA's and the BMZ's engagement contribute to the long-term goals of both ministries and of the German government?
- D. **Connectedness/sustainability:** Were the AA and the BMZ able to ensure the connectedness of what they achieved, or to anchor it sustainably?⁷
- E. **Efficiency:** Did the AA and the BMZ do the right thing in the best possible way?
- F. **Coherence:** Were the AA's and the BMZ's actions internally coherent, synergistic across ministries, and externally/internationally coordinated?

The underlying basis for the evaluation is a theory-based approach involving the collection, analysis and interpretation of a wide range of primary and secondary data using a mixed-methods approach. Conflict-sensitive practices were continuously ensured. Although the members of the working group based in Germany were unable to conduct their own field research due to the pandemic, it was still possible to carry out the data collection largely as planned in the inception report, thanks to Internet-based communication. In terms of sources, the evaluation is based on a comprehensive portfolio analysis along with the analysis of strategic and operational documents from both ministries, thematic and region-specific documents, and project documentation. It also draws on primary data from 227 semi-structured individual and group interviews, a criteria-based selection of example projects, a standardised survey of the implementing organisations, a perception-based survey conducted among the Iraqi population with 400 respondents in Mosul and 500 in Dohuk, and ten focus group discussions.

3. ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IRAQ ENGAGEMENT

The overall impression of both ministries' engagement is positive, especially in light of the volatile context in Iraq. Both ministries largely succeeded in making a significant contribution to dealing with the crisis by means of measures to alleviate acute hardship as well as measures for reconstruction. One indication of the success of international contributions is that, by the end of 2019, almost 75 % of all internally displaced persons had returned to their home regions. The contribution of the AA and the BMZ was important in that they played a substantial part in creating the conditions for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees – for example, by demining, rehabilitating key infrastructure or providing short-term employment through cash-for-work programmes. Given the exceptionally difficult conditions of the Iraqi context in the years 2014 to 2019, the contribution of these measures to meeting immediate basic needs, thereby preserving the human dignity of vulnerable internally displaced persons and refugees, and to (re)building basic infrastructure can be rated a success. Germany was the third largest donor country during this period, and thus succeeded in making important contributions, via the AA and the BMZ, to the immediate stabilisation of Iraq.

At the same time, the evaluation findings show that both the medium- and long-term effectiveness and the sustainability of the engagement are distinctly limited at the present time. Firstly,

⁷ The AA pursues measures in various foreign policy areas of action (humanitarian assistance, stabilisation) in which the concept of sustainability is not applicable; where intended, it is instead replaced by the criterion of connectedness.

sustainable anchoring of the majority of measures has not been possible due to capacity shortfalls and the Iraqi government's reluctance to take ownership. Secondly, the Iraqi government's limited capacity for action and its hesitant reform efforts further constrain the potential of German measures to contribute significantly to addressing the structural causes of the crisis.

The evaluation seeks to foster learning from the experience gained during the engagement. Referring to evaluation criteria, it draws particular attention to challenges at the implementation level and at the strategic level, which does not diminish the positive overall impression of what has been achieved to date. The findings are ultimately also intended to support the German government's accountability to the Bundestag and to contribute to the transparency of Germany's engagement in Iraq.

Relevance

The ministry-specific objectives of the AA and the BMZ in Iraq harmonise with Germany's objectives and interests, as presented in consolidated form in the German government's report on the situation in Iraq, dated September 4th, 2018⁸. The foundations for Germany's engagement in Iraq were laid in the foreign policy decision of 2014, which was grounded in international and constitutional law, to respond to the Iraqi government's request for international assistance⁹ to combat and end the dominance of the terrorist organisation known as Islamic State (IS).¹⁰ Alongside the military components, the German government thus formulated directly associated objectives for civilian measures. The German government's objectives included stabilising Iraq, improving prospects for the Iraqi population to remain in and return to their home regions, reducing causes of displacement and irregular migration, and supporting peaceful and inclusive development of the country in line with the sustainability agenda of the United Nations (UN). Within the scope of the German government's integrated engagement, the AA and the BMZ have been pursuing these objectives through their portfolios since 2014. The ministries' objectives changed over the course of time. Their focus at the beginning of the crisis, on meeting the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees and on short-term stabilisation, was gradually broadened to include reconstruction and tackling core structural problems of the crisis. The portfolios of both ministries harmonise with the German government's objective of supporting stability in the region.

The AA's and the BMZ's work areas and budget lines were configured in accordance with Germany's overarching objective and interests. At first, direct linkages between objectives arose for the AA-financed humanitarian assistance in connection with the evacuation of the civilian population from the combat zones and their timely and secure return. Even during and immediately after the gradual military liberation of the territories occupied by the so-called IS, the commencement of the AA's stabilisation measures coincided with the BMZ's measures aimed at stabilisation. The AA's stabilisation measures included the strengthening of government capacities for demining, booby-trap clearance, building the local administration and community-based policing; for reappraisal and reconciliation (social cohesion), and for the rehabilitation of infrastructure. The BMZ's measures aimed at stabilisation focused on food security, social cohesion, reintegration, and especially the reconstruction of social and productive infrastructure, as well as short-term measures to stimulate the local economy. From 2017 onwards, the BMZ addressed structural causes of the crisis with bilateral Technical and Financial Cooperation (TC/FC) measures in the areas of decentralisation of governance and private sector development. In tandem, the AA's AKBP in the areas of cultural education, university cooperation and media

⁸ Deutscher Bundestag: Drucksache 19/4070: Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung. Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage in Irak und zum deutschen Irak-Engagement, 2018 [Parliamentary paper 19/4070: Briefing by the German Federal Government. Report of the German Federal Government on the situation in Iraq and on Germany's Iraq engagement; in German]

⁹ Letter dated 25 June 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General

¹⁰ <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/406640/f7360c19a338943a9e22d84292948913/WD-2-239-14-pdf-data.pdf> [Parliamentary position paper on the foundations in international and constitutional law; in German]

promotion was dedicated to the long-term objectives of opening up pre-political spaces, facilitating societal discourses and strengthening civil society engagement.

The AA and BMZ portfolios were oriented towards Iraq's objectives and needs, a coordinated needs assessment having been undertaken with the Iraqi government, particularly in the context of international advisory formats. The latter included key working groups addressing stabilisation, such as the Working Group on Stabilization (WGoS) and the Stabilization Task Force (STF) of the international anti-IS coalition, of which Germany – represented by the Federal Foreign Office – served as co-chair in both cases, and addressing humanitarian assistance, in view of the annual Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). In addition, Germany received some direct inquiries from Iraqi government bodies seeking to identify geographical or thematic priorities of German development cooperation. During the initial phase, however, opportunities to involve population groups in the needs assessment were often non-existent, due to the great time pressure and the limited access to target groups.

The ministry-specific and joint ministerial strategic planning for the AA's and BMZ's engagement in Iraq was mostly ad hoc, especially from 2014 to 2017. For parts of the portfolio, it was not possible to rely on a strategy in the traditional sense developed in complete planning depth, not least because the early crisis response was directly linked to military progress and the resulting needs, and planning went hand in hand with a continuous learning process. Planning processes were updated as more was learnt from the day-to-day operations of both ministries and based on political reports. Fully elaborated strategy documents (not project documents) specifying objectives, measures, responsibilities, time horizons and indicators, existed at the project level (for example, in the context of stabilisation, this was the case within implementing organisations like the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) from 2017), but there was nothing equivalent that came directly from the AA or the BMZ. Considering the portfolio volumes between 2014 and 2019 of approx. 800 million euros for the AA and approx. 1.3 billion euros for the BMZ, this is inexplicable and has to be rated as unsatisfactory. Towards the end of 2017 at the latest, a greater depth of strategic planning should have been undertaken when the prospect of a longer-term engagement in Iraq emerged in the aftermath of the liberation of Mosul, in order to ensure a coherent course of action and make use of potential synergies. With specific regard to the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus in Iraq, there was also a lack of joint strategic planning in the first few years of the engagement. This improved from 2018, however, as was reflected in Iraq's status as a pilot country for the policy concept on joint analysis and coordinated planning ("*Konzept zur gemeinsamen Analyse und abgestimmten Planung*", GAAP).

The German and international engagement in Iraq was highly visible to the population, which indirectly led to challenges regarding the legitimacy of the Iraqi government. The contribution of the AA and the BMZ was perceived as very visible, both by the Iraqi population and in the international arena. The volume and the nature of the German support were rated as high and positive. Between 2014 and 2018, however, the aim pursued, in part through the UNDP stabilisation measures financed by the AA and BMZ, was to give less visibility to international activities and more to the Iraqi government's capacity for action, thus strengthening its legitimacy. In this regard, the reluctance of Iraqi government departments to take ownership posed a major challenge. The UNDP changed its strategy in 2018 and began to market its contributions more overtly as its own. What concrete influence these measures had on strengthening the legitimacy of the Iraqi government could not be analysed within the parameters of the evaluation. The Iraqi government's reputation initially rose in step with the gradual liberation of the IS-occupied territories, but this was short-lived. Instead, the prestige of international actors rose increasingly and disproportionately in comparison to the Iraqi government.

Effectiveness

The short-term, mainly output-level objectives of the projects examined were largely achieved, even during and despite the acute crisis phase. The engagement of both ministries made important contributions to safeguarding the meeting of basic needs in the short term, and hence to preserving the human dignity of vulnerable internally displaced persons and refugees, and to stabilising and rehabilitating basic infrastructure. However, as yet only isolated contributions

to understanding and reconciliation have been made. So far, there has also been little success in substantially strengthening the Iraqi state's service provision and ownership. Particularly with regard to the short- to medium-term functionality of the built infrastructure, this has to be rated critically.

Planning and steering by the ministries have not been sufficiently impact-oriented and conflict-sensitive so far. Aggregating monitoring systems at portfolio level were not in place or only existed at output level in certain instances. Monitoring systems were in place at the implementation level of individual measures but these, too, often showed considerable room for improvement with regard to their impact orientation and conflict sensitivity. The ministries succeeded in adjusting their orientation flexibly in response to changing political requirements and Iraq's immediate needs. At the same time, partly due to inadequate data, the ministries did not always succeed in adjusting the steering of the engagement in good time to ensure its medium- and long-term effectiveness. This is apparent in connection with the liberation of Mosul in 2017, for example. On the one hand, the necessary thematic and geographical reorientation of the engagement in response to current needs was accomplished rapidly and flexibly. On the other hand, the subsequent ongoing steering of the engagement was not sufficiently impact-oriented – for example, in terms of the development policy connectedness of the measures and the development of possible exit strategies.

Approaches for dealing with external risks were sometimes inadequate at the strategic level, whereas they mostly succeeded at the implementation level. External factors such as the volatile security situation or the Iraqi government's ineffective administration made it difficult for international measures to achieve their objectives. Risks at the operational level were largely identified, considered and integrated into operational planning, for which the BMZ carried out Peace and Conflict Assessments from 2013 while the AA made use of Stabilisation Risk Analyses (SRA). However, there was still a lack of promising approaches at the strategic level during the initial phase of the engagement.

With the exception of environmental standards, cross-cutting issues were well anchored conceptually and largely taken into account in the elaboration of the Iraq portfolio. There was only partial success in implementing them, however. Conflict sensitivity, human rights, inclusion of vulnerable population groups and gender equality were relatively well anchored conceptually, and were largely reflected in the portfolio. Some aspects are in need of further elaboration, such as requirements for conflict-sensitive practices, while environmental standards have received very little attention so far. However, the responsible divisions and implementation partners were not always equipped with the necessary capacities – for example, to establish conflict- and gender-sensitive practices and the associated monitoring. This had adverse consequences on the quality of project implementation, among other things.

Impacts

The impacts of the AA's and the BMZ's engagement can be linked to the various levels of objectives in the reconstructed theory of change. However, the less crisis-oriented and the more systemic the defined outcomes, the more risk-laden and less certain the achievement of the objectives proved to be. Among the higher-priority outcomes, four in particular were reviewed and assessed:

- To increase the resilience of individuals and local institutions, direct contributions were made by constructing mostly functional basic infrastructure and providing various services (health, WASH, education, cash for work, etc.).
- To strengthen social cohesion, contributions to reconciliation and communication were made in the areas of administration, media and culture. However, these have only achieved isolated successes so far, which can be explained in terms of the crisis and the context. Longer time frames are essential and all-important if an effective contribution is to be made to the moving target of social cohesion.
- Isolated contributions to improving the conditions for good governance were likewise made at the local level by means of reconstruction – of municipal structures, for example, – and capacity building in the areas of demining and water/electricity supply. However, the

functionality of Iraqi administrative organs has not yet been consolidated at the local level. Projects to support decentralisation and political participation have been financed since 2017, but in view of their short durations within the period under review (2017–2019), it was still too soon to observe any impacts at the time of this evaluation. As yet, only a few of the projects funded have had a primary objective of promoting the rule of law at the central government level, reducing corruption or increasing the efficiency of the administration. One exception is the flanking structure financed by the AA and implemented by KfW under the United Loan Guarantee (*Ungebundene Finanzkredite – UFK*) scheme, which has made isolated contributions to improving administrative practices and preventing corruption by improving tendering and contract-awarding procedures in UFK-financed projects.

- Since 2017, contributions have been made to strengthening particular aspects of the private sector. For example, support was provided to chambers of commerce and selected micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and employment promotion measures have been carried out successfully. However, German measures to bring about decisive improvements in conditions to support diversification of the Iraqi economy in the future are considered to have very limited potential. This can largely be attributed to Iraq's dominant rent-seeking economy and the lack of political will to make reforms, which is due in part to obstructive forces within and outside the government. Against this backdrop, the future impact potential with regard to the supporting the private sector is also assessed as low, unless the international community succeeds in persuading Iraq to implement the necessary reforms.

Unintended negative effects have not been adequately recorded at the implementation level thus far. Nevertheless, the deterioration in perceptions of the Iraqi government's performance of state tasks as compared to the international community clearly emerged as an unintended negative effect in the course of the evaluation. Moreover, there were indications of corruption, particularly over preferential access to infrastructure measures sponsored by international donors, as well as one specific reference to sexual violence and exploitation; none of these related to German-funded measures, however. The extent of corruption, sexual violence and exploitation, and the associated risks posed to measures forming part of the German government's engagement, could not be captured within the scope of the evaluation.

Unintended negative effects on local power structures, in terms of demographic shifts (for example in Sinjar), were also reported. Because the evaluation was largely undertaken remotely, however, it was not possible to verify whether there was any direct link with AA and/or BMZ-financed measures. Finally, the measures did in part reinforce Iraq's dependence on international cooperation. There is a lack of mechanisms for systematically monitoring negative effects and initiating appropriate corrective measures as necessary.

Connectedness and sustainability

Strengthened efforts to ensure the connectedness and sustainability of the portfolio were increasingly in evidence, but durable linkages to Iraqi structures have not yet been established in most cases. In this regard, it must be noted that the two ministries have different strategies with different aspirations regarding connectedness and sustainability. While all the BMZ's budget lines and parts of the AA's AKBP line are geared towards sustainability, humanitarian assistance as such and the AA's quick-impact stabilisation measures (from 2017 onward) adhere to the connectedness criterion. It is noted that both ministries are making only patchy efforts as yet to achieve cross-ministry connectedness between their work areas in keeping with the HDP nexus. The connectedness or handover to Iraqi structures that is necessary for the sustainability of the measures was often not a priority objective of measures, or was impossible owing to the weakness of structures or the lack of will demonstrated by the relevant Iraqi actors. Moreover, plausible and fully elaborated exit strategies or scenarios often did not exist. The Funding Facility for Stabilization, Iraq's most important stabilisation programme in both financial and thematic terms, still lacks these to date. Increased efforts to involve and build the capacity of Iraqi actors and towards the elaboration of exit strategies were identifiable over the course of the period under review.

While the sustainability of particular effects appears plausible at the individual level, at least, at the institutional level it is greatly in jeopardy. At the individual level, that is to say among the

persons benefiting from the measures, it is plausible to assume that the effects achieved will confer short-term benefits and endure in the long term, at least to some extent. At the institutional level, the effects achieved are unlikely to be sustainable, in view of the frequent failure to connect with or integrate into Iraqi structures and against the backdrop of capacity shortfalls and the great difficulty of requiring the Iraqi government to take ownership, which therefore remains low. Particularly in central Iraq, there has been little success in building up or strengthening the requisite administrative capacities or promoting the necessary degree of Iraqi government ownership to ensure sustainability. Mention must also be made of the complicated contextual conditions (numerous lines of conflict as well as fragile statehood), which made it particularly difficult to apply strict conditionality without detrimentally affecting the Iraqi population. Some early successes can be nevertheless be noted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). However, the financing and continuation of AA- and BMZ-initiated measures by Iraqi actors on a permanent and self-reliant basis has yet to be secured, either in central Iraq or in the KRI.

Efficiency

The thematic and processual elaboration of the ministries' work areas and budget lines was generally suitable for the crisis-responsive engagement in Iraq. However, efficiency losses occurred between budget lines due to a lack of distinctness and the resultant greater need for coordination between the BMZ-funded SI Displacement and TDA and the AA's stabilisation measures. There were also deficits in the coordination between the areas of humanitarian assistance and the AA's stabilisation approach; closer coordination and interlinkage with the latter could have contributed to higher efficiency. The cooperation of both ministries with different types of implementation partners (from the UN system, implementing organisations, independent intermediaries, NGOs) had a fundamentally favourable effect on efficiency but entailed challenges with regard to efficient implementation. Efficiency-oriented reflection on strategic orientation and inquiry as to the areas in which the German engagement could achieve its greatest possible lever effects, and how, were often secondary considerations.

The duration of the crisis-specific measures was appropriate for the most part. The more systemic the objectives, however, the more unrealistic the envisaged time frames proved to be in view of the challenging contextual conditions. This applies to BMZ measures for institutional capacity building, for example. Across both ministries, extending the terms of project and commissioning a succession of follow-up projects enabled longer overall durations in some cases, but this way of proceeding also entailed efficiency losses due to a lack of planning certainty. In contrast, the crisis-specific measures raise the question of imposing time limits, especially with regard to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). Taken as a whole, the German engagement predominantly reached the target groups in a timely manner, but examples of delays were also in evidence.

The ministries' staffing and logistical resources for the planning and deployment of the allocated funding were not appropriate, especially at the beginning. This can be understood in terms of the mismatch whereby human resources planning trailed behind the rapid upturn in funding, and ultimately remained out of proportion in both ministries. Although staffing was boosted, the scaled-up resources remained distinctly below the necessary staffing coverage. Knowledge lost as a result of staff rotation also had an inhibiting effect on efficiency, as did logistical constraints – such as the initial absence of support structures on the ground or the unavailability of secure means of transport, which are crucial in order to be able to visit political partners on the ground and manage complex projects.

Structural challenges on the Iraqi side also had an inhibiting effect on efficiency. These included Iraq's persistently fragile context, the volatile security situation, the associated high security costs and transaction times (delays, etc.) and the prevalence of corruption. The latter issue – although concrete cases are hard to pin down – is a significant factor limiting the efficiency of measures in Iraq.

Cross-ministry coherence

In the first few years, the engagement of the AA and the BMZ proceeded largely without cross-ministry coherence, although positive trends had become discernible, particularly

since 2018. At the strategic level, the GAAP policy concept was implemented from the end of 2018 onwards, which places Iraq in a pioneering role as the pilot country for the AA and the BMZ. The two ministries now systematically exchange analyses, but are still only in the early stages of conducting joint analysis to build a shared understanding of the context.

The degree of coordination in planning improved over time at the strategic level. However, there has been no common strategic approach or joint definition of overall goals during the evaluation period or, indeed, to date. At the implementation level, there was a similar lack of instruments to promote cooperation. Progress has been made since 2019 at least with an approach (the Nexus Chapeau approach) to improve the dovetailing of the AA's humanitarian assistance measures with the BMZ's transitional development assistance. However, improvements concerning cross-ministry coherence at the level of project measures, particularly with regard to ensuring connectedness and generating synergies, had not yet become apparent.

The objectives of the AA and the BMZ formed a coherent overall picture. In the jointly reconstructed theory of change, it became clear that the AA and the BMZ focused on different thematic objectives of the German government in keeping with their different ministerial remits, and that some of these objectives (such as the creation of secure prospects for remaining in or returning to home regions) were pursued by both ministries on a complementary basis. While their thematic orientation is thus rated as largely coherent, divergences were evident with regard to their regional orientation. For example, right from the start of its stabilisation engagement, the AA urged the BMZ to focus its activities geographically on central Iraq in light of the foreign policy objective of strengthening the legitimacy of the central Iraqi government, and to give that government greater involvement despite the challenging framework conditions, which were difficult for other actors as well. However, due to the enormous needs of central Iraqi refugees in the KRI, and having cooperated effectively with the regional government of the KRI at the beginning of the crisis, it was in the latter region that the BMZ concentrated the majority of its engagement.

Potential synergies have barely been realised as yet; duplications of effort have been avoided by increasing the coordination workload. Despite the joint addressing of objectives and areas of action across both ministries' budget lines, cross-ministry synergies have barely been achieved as yet. One factor that undermined the use of potential synergies was the lack of shared definitions and clearly delineated competences for the areas of action addressed by both ministries, such as stabilisation and peacebuilding. Consequently, the ministries often tended to grapple over demarcation lines rather than prioritising the promotion of a common, synergistic approach. Visible duplications, in the sense of unintended overlaps, were successfully avoided. A frequent lack of distinctness between the two ministries' budget lines due to the close thematic proximity of their areas of action and measures was found to result in significantly higher coordination workload.

External coherence

The ministries made use of potential synergies and avoided duplicating measures by other international and Iraqi actors. At the very start of the period under review, the AA assumed an important role in central coordination structures and took a substantial hand in shaping the joint crisis response and the associated short-term stabilisation approach. In particular, the AA strengthened the coordination of international efforts through its co-chairmanship of the STF and the WGoS. The high financial inputs from both ministries underpinned the engagement and, combined with the deployment of staff, contributed to heightening the international community's perception of Germany. Taken together, the ministries deployed 56 % per cent of their project volume through United Nations organisations in order to take advantage of international implementation and coordination structures, make use of potential synergies and avoid duplications of effort. Furthermore, projects financed by the ministries were represented on numerous regional and sectoral coordination bodies. Under the Humanitarian Cluster System, humanitarian assistance was broken down by sector (such as WASH, cash programmes, food, protection, etc.) and coordinated at the level of the UN OCHA (with NGOs, international organisations and members of the Iraqi government).

To date, there is no common strategic approach for the international community's medium- and long-term engagement in Iraq. The international coordination structures were decentralised

and diversified over time. However, decentralised dialogue with the Iraqi government harbours the risk of reducing the potential leverage of the international engagement vis-à-vis the Iraqi government and thus inhibiting its effectiveness. At least, this is the case as long as the lack of a unified international system of incentives allows the Iraqi government to shirk any demands that it deems too onerous, such as the implementation of structural reforms, when voiced by individual actors. Nevertheless, the joint formulation of strategic objectives creates potential for the German government to identify political “levers” and international instruments, and to shape the dialogue with the Iraqi government more coherently. Without a German strategy, however, there is no basis for a consistent dialogue with the international community or for the elaboration of a common strategic approach in Iraq.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through their engagement in Iraq between 2014 and 2019, the AA and the BMZ made important contributions to stabilising Iraq in the short term and strengthening the resilience of target groups. As part of this, they succeeded in bolstering the central role of the civilian component of the international crisis response. This was and still is significant insofar as the attempts at stabilisation by international actors since 2003 in the aftermath of the Iraq war had largely been focused on purely military counterinsurgency measures. Given the exceptionally difficult conditions of the Iraqi context between 2014 and 2019, the contributions made to meeting short-term basic needs, thereby preserving the human dignity of vulnerable internally displaced persons and refugees, and to (re)building basic infrastructure can be rated a success. As the third largest donor country between 2014 and 2019, Germany was thus able to make important contributions to the immediate political stabilisation of Iraq and to strengthening the resilience of the population.

At the same time, the evaluation findings show that both the medium- and long-term effectiveness and the sustainability of the engagement are distinctly limited. Against the backdrop of capacity shortfalls and the Iraqi government's reluctance to take ownership, currently it can be considered unlikely that the ministries will achieve their long-term and structure-building objectives such as strengthening social cohesion or creating conditions for good governance. A point of criticism in this regard is that neither the German ministries nor the international community have yet succeeded in developing a strong and coherent system of incentives or controls as a means of ensuring the sustainability of measures.

It is now for the ministries to make a decision about their continuing engagement in Iraq. To serve as a foundation for that decision, among other things they should generate a joint problem definition as well as clarifying and specifying Germany's objectives and interests. If their engagement is to be continued, each ministry should further develop the strategic and operational elements of its engagement in order to respond effectively to the challenges identified. This calls for a joint, integrated approach in keeping with the HDP nexus. In the aim of improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the two ministries' cooperation both in and beyond Iraq, the results obtained in the criteria-led analysis are presented below in terms of challenges and recommendations framed within an ideal-typical policy cycle.

Problem definition

The fundamental prerequisite for coordinated and integrated action by the German government in crisis situations such as the one in Iraq is that a joint problem definition for the given situation has to be formulated beforehand. The problem definition is concerned with the core questions as to which foreign policy and development policy issues exist in an evolving crisis situation, which German interests might be at stake, how these might be affected by the crisis, and on that basis, to what extent and in what way Germany needs to act or react. The problem definition lays the foundation for analysing the needs to be addressed by German measures and developing a joint strategy.

Regarding the starting point in the summer of 2014, it is noted that the ministry-specific assessments only partially reflected the concurrent nature of Iraq's various issues, and that no joint ministerial assessment took place. It was key to the assessment of Iraq's situation since

2014 that the acute risk of state collapse and the response to urgent humanitarian needs were clearly prioritised over Iraq's chronic development problems, which were bound up with its rent-seeking economy and other structural and long-term realities. The ministries' assessment was initially oriented towards the acute escalation of the crisis. A consequence of this even today is the concentration of crisis response measures and the lack of clarity as to what role Germany can or should assume in tackling structural problems in Iraq in the long term.

In the absence of a consolidated development policy and foreign policy assessment drawing on both ministries' core competencies, they arrived at parallel assessments. These culminated in strategic orientations and measures in which the AA and the BMZ responses to the acute situation coincided very closely at times, before Iraq became a pilot country for the GAAP approach at the end of 2018. To date, there is still no consolidated joint assessment of (a) Iraq's specifically development-related problems nor (b) a specific foreign policy appraisal extending to the regional situation as a whole and its significance for Germany's interests in Iraq.

Because the two ministries' problem definitions had such an emphasis on crisis, synergy potentials remained unutilised, which in turn inhibited effectiveness, efficiency and sustainable impact. A balanced joint analysis of both the acute and the chronic problems of Iraq would have opened up the opportunity for fuller utilisation of the ministries' core competencies and potential synergies. This could have contributed to a developmentally innovative approach addressing Iraq's status as a resource-rich upper middle income country in the crisis context, while at the same time measures for stabilisation might have been defined with greater clarity – especially regarding their duration, principles for action and action areas. Both elements would have been relevant for the joint elaboration of the HDP nexus, which only became a source of guidance for AA- and BMZ-funded measures over the course of years.

The limited analysis capacities of the ministries posed their own challenge. In countries where foreign and development policy penetration is lower, as was the case in Iraq before 2014, the ministries have limited region- and country-specific human resources and capacities at their disposal. The example of Iraq clearly shows how challenges can come to a head so quickly and acutely that it is indispensable to maintain relevant technical and country- and region-specific expertise, otherwise this has to be built up rapidly. The significant upturn in funding volume thus exacerbated the challenges of staffing management, which at times had negative consequences for strategy building, programme formulation and project implementation.

Strategy development

The strategy building that took place was entirely ministry-internal rather than interministerial and was not finalised in written form, either by the individual ministries or jointly. Set against the large volumes of funding and projects involved in the respective engagements, this is inappropriate. Instead, until the GAAP process commenced, strategic decisions were made primarily on the basis of ministry-specific assessments, which encouraged dysfunctional inter-ministry competition over competences.

Accordingly, the ministries still lack a concrete, joint strategic-conceptual elaboration of the HDP nexus to date. Although the important areas of action for the HDP nexus were being addressed, interlinkages between them were not actively promoted, which explains why, even in the case of Iraq, a silo mentality and habitual ministry-specific practices often prevailed. Rather than any joint strategy development, all that happened were catch-up adjustments of the HDP strategies.

Joint strategies for stabilisation and peacebuilding have not yet been developed, although the AA and the BMZ underwent important processes of rapprochement in Iraq. Policy approaches for areas including stabilisation and peacebuilding and definitions of the said areas were repeatedly discussed between the AA and the BMZ, and were documented in the German government's guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace" (2017) and its "Operations Manual – Interministerial Approach to Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts and Building Peace" (2019). However, there is still a need for further concretisation of the demarcation lines within the areas of action and of functional coordination mechanisms, in order to deploy the ministry-specific competences for these joint policy areas optimally and synergistically.

Strategy development did not take sufficient account of risks and unmet needs. Firstly, there is still largely a lack of joint ministerial strategic responses to known structural risks of working in Iraq. This limited the effectiveness of the engagement in Iraq, which is not a typical developing country due to its wealth of resources. So far, the ministries have lacked a consistent approach that succeeds in persuading the Iraqi authorities to take ownership. The virulence of the region's ongoing political risks was another impediment to direct impacts. It was also unclear from the engagement which strategies the German government was pursuing, beyond addressing the known underlying political objectives and meeting unmet needs, to make use of further-reaching political levers. While conditionalising support in the immediate crisis context was not a foreign policy option, the question raised in the meantime is how better use can be made of Iraq's own resources and to what extent Germany can exert greater development policy and foreign policy influence in harmony with the global agenda for sustainable development.

Programme/project formulation

The necessary staff resources for steering were not scaled up to the levels that would have been required to keep pace with the major increases in financial resources. Within a period of only five years, the two ministries built up a portfolio of over two billion euros in Iraq, one of Germany's largest portfolios worldwide, with a multitude of implementing partners. However, the ministries' staff resourcing, both in Germany and in the two foreign missions, did not sufficiently honour this complexity. This had negative consequences for all work areas of the two ministries, and on the impacts of the financial resources deployed.

Due to the staffing challenges and the great pressure to achieve funding outflows, the divisions in the ministries could not always do justice to their task of assessing the content of project proposals from implementation partners, and thus exerting an influence on the thematic and strategic orientation of projects within the overall portfolio. Because of the shortfall in staff resources relative to the upturn in projects during the evaluation period, as well as a lack of regional or technical expertise in some instances, it was not always possible to assess the content of project concepts and proposals appropriately, and thus effectively exert an influence on the orientation of projects and of the portfolio as a whole. High pressure to achieve funding outflows, partly due to parliamentary deadlines for budgetary spending, was a contributory factor to the ministries' focus on spending funding as quickly as possible in compliance with the rules. To a certain extent, the strategic steering and elaboration of programmes and projects and the verification of defined quality criteria eluded the ministries' shaping influence.

The engagement of both ministries was closely aligned with the needs of the Iraqi authorities and population. However, at times projects were formulated without any direct involvement of target groups, which resulted in vagueness from the viewpoint of needs orientation in some cases. For example, due to the volatile security situation and the great time pressure, the involvement of local target groups in project planning was often minimal. This led to some individual measures which bypassed the needs of vulnerable population groups. It also harboured the additional risks of allowing measures to be instrumentalised by Iraqi actors in their own political interests, leaving potential for strengthening ownership unexploited, or fuelling conflicts.

Project implementation

The majority of cross-cutting issues were well anchored at the strategic level. However, their implementation at project level fell short of the ministries' aspirations in some cases. The evaluation shows that the cross-cutting issues were reflected well in the portfolio. One exception was the issue of environmental standards; these were given too little consideration in view of their enormous relevance for Iraq as a country severely affected by climate change. When it came to stringent implementation of the other cross-cutting issues in the measures, however, the responsible divisions and implementation partners sometimes lacked the necessary cross-cutting capacity and sensitivity. Accordingly, the implementation of cross-cutting issues fell short of the aspirations in some cases. This had negative consequences for the effectiveness of the measures.

The Nexus Chapeau approach was the first attempt by the two ministries to develop a conceptual framework for strengthening cross-ministry coherence at the level of measures,

although it has not realised its potential in Iraq so far. The development of the approach is a tangible and important achievement of the cooperation between the AA and the BMZ. Nevertheless, the operationalisation of the approach in Iraq still posed numerous challenges, even during the planning phase. Moreover, because the approach could only be applied to implementation through NGOs, in terms of financial volume it had only covered a relatively small share of the existing engagement. To strengthen interministerial cooperation beyond these bounds in the medium term, the question is to what extent similar approaches can be used when working with implementation partners of other types.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

The monitoring systems at strategic and implementation level have barely permitted impact-oriented steering of the portfolio so far. Monitoring systems existed at project level but were not always designed to be impact-oriented or conflict- and gender-sensitive, even though this was an explicit concern not just for the AA and the BMZ but also for many of the implementation partners. Furthermore, in most cases neither the AA nor the BMZ had access to aggregated monitoring data for the individual work areas or budget lines. With vast number of individual reports as a basis, it was scarcely possible for the ministries to draw conclusions for the ongoing strategic design of the portfolio or to make steering adjustments while project measures were still in progress. Thus, the strategic steering by both ministries was mostly rapid, flexible and needs-oriented, but not sufficiently evidence-based and impact-oriented.

Unintended negative effects were not usually recorded systematically. Hence, the ministries could barely assess their extent and could only counteract them with difficulty. So far, negative effects have only been surveyed at the level of measures – by means of the implementation partners' complaint mechanisms, for example. In view of the high barriers to access for the target groups, this passive method of gathering information only permits very limited conclusions to be drawn about the actual occurrence of negative effects. Particularly in light of the do-no-harm approach and the major engagement in the corruption-prone construction sector, this aspect needs to be brought up to standard. Since the quality criterion of conflict sensitivity was introduced under the “BMZ 2030” reform strategy (2020),¹¹ it is now mandatory for all development cooperation measures to monitor for unintended effects and to initiate corrective measures. The AA developed the Stabilisation Risk Analysis (SRA) in 2018 as an approach for identifying and mitigating foreign policy risks and possible negative impacts; it has been mandatory for all stabilisation projects since 2020.

Recommendations:

- 1. The two ministries should carry out ministry-specific and joint analyses in order to better identify and more precisely define Germany's objectives and interests and, building on these, the core foreign and development policy problems in Iraq.** This joint analysis work must be used to underpin the engagement with a common understanding and to clarify and precisely define a possibly long-term role for Germany in crisis management and in addressing structural problems in Iraq. It is a prerequisite for the ministries' strategy development.

Implementation notes: This should include (further) development of the ministry-specific analyses of (a) the foreign policy appraisal including the regional situation as a whole, (b) Iraq's development-related problems, and (c) the significance of both for Germany's objectives and interests in Iraq. All of the above should more obviously cross-reference each other. Other ministries should also be brought into the analysis if necessary. It should be ensured that the analyses are carried out on the same data basis. Ideally, they will result in a common understanding of challenges and potentials as a foundation for a possible continuation of the two ministries' engagement in Iraq. During this process, the

¹¹ BMZ: BMZ 2030 reform strategy. New thinking, new direction (2020)
https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/29026/a73123a6094263264e921881d6b76f90/Materialie520_BMZ%202030%20reform%20strategy

ministries should make different perspectives and assessments transparent and reach agreement on how resulting consequences are to be dealt with.

- 2. The ministries should develop mechanisms for dealing coherently with contradictory opinions – for example, on the conclusions deriving from the problem analysis or in the course of planning and steering.** In this way, they can reduce the risk of divergent assessments being perpetuated into strategy development and programme formulation processes.

Implementation notes: The AA and the BMZ are required to carry out joint interministerial work; this equally applies to the engagement of both ministries in Iraq. In the event of conflicting views about the problems or the choice of strategic responses, the AA and the BMZ should define a mediation and decision-making mechanism. After passing the level of department heads, such matters should be clarified at the level of state secretaries and then, should the necessity arise, at a level above the ministries' individual domains of responsibility. The Federal Chancellery (whose role in the Iraq engagement was not part of the evaluation) is tasked with bringing more structure to the interfaces between the political and the ministerial-administrative levels while upholding the principle of ministerial autonomy; it should act to establish clarity in such instances in view of its authority to determine policy guidelines. While upholding the principle of ministerial responsibility, this could contribute to resolving differences of opinion, within the meaning of Art. 65 of the German constitution, by adopting a coherent problem definition across all departments of the Federal Government and thus strengthening the whole-of-government approach.

- 3. On the basis of the joint problem definition, the two ministries should continue to strengthen the “coordinated planning” provided for in the GAAP policy concept. They can do this by jointly formulating realistic strategic objectives, ensuring that instruments are used coherently, and jointly identifying responses to structural risks affecting their engagement in Iraq and anchoring these in their strategies.**

Implementation notes: While upholding the principle of ministerial responsibility and the jointly developed common understanding, AA and BMZ officials should coordinate planning more closely than they have done in the formats that already exist. As is already the practice to some extent, other ministries should be involved if necessary. Ministry-specific foreign and development policy interests, objectives and strategies should be defined and coordinated such that they comprehensively satisfy the requirements of the HDP nexus. A written strategy would (a) ensure the coherence of objectives, (b) more clearly structure the dialogue with the Iraqi government – including the issue of its ownership – and international actors, and (c) coherently strengthen the various forms in which German engagement is intentionally made visible. When attention is paid to structural risks, the lack of Iraqi ownership must be prioritised. The current efforts to elicit commitment from the Iraqi government should be further pursued and developed. Jointly with the Iraqi government, the ministries should agree on minimum standards of cooperation, not only in the context of joint political consultations but also with regard to financial inputs from Iraq. Moreover, the AA and the BMZ should reach agreement on a joint course of action in the event that efforts to strengthen Iraqi ownership are unsuccessful.

- 4. The ministries should make clearer distinctions between the policy instruments used and coordinate them more closely with one another at the level of work areas and budget lines, particularly against the backdrop of the HDP nexus.**

Implementation notes: In the course of ministry-specific and joint ministerial strategy development, the AA and the BMZ should identify the country-specific opportunities for implementing the HDP nexus and should specify and document operationalisation milestones. For this purpose, it is necessary to articulate a clearer definition of the ministries' work areas in a given partner country such as Iraq, and to intensify

consultations. This is most important in places where clear demarcation lines have not been drawn so far, and particularly between humanitarian assistance, transitional development assistance and the SI Displacement, and between the AA's stabilisation measures and transitional development assistance. The same guidance applies to the AA internally in respect of a more effective interlinkage of humanitarian assistance and stabilisation.

- 5. The ministries should work towards making sufficient sector- and region-specific staff capacities available in Germany and in Iraq for analysis, strategy development, project formulation, supporting project implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and learning, and towards having the capability to scale up flexibly if need be.**

Implementation notes: For example, a staffing matrix could be developed for this purpose which stipulates threshold financial volumes or threshold numbers of German engagement measures in Iraq and specifies for each threshold how many desk officers for foreign policy or economic cooperation and development are to be seconded abroad or employed in the main offices. The ministries should also examine whether such a matrix might be practicable in other crisis-affected countries. Bearing in mind the rotation principle, the ministries should ensure that the necessary ministry-specific technical and regional expertise is in place, both in the responsible divisions and in the foreign missions in Iraq. In this way, they can be sure of their capability to formulate realistic objectives and strategies and identify and anticipate country-specific core problems, potentials and risks. The ministries should ensure that they have the necessary staff capacities available to carry out analysis and strategic steering and to provide adequate and thematically competent support and advice to the implementing organisations. Due to the rapidly changing conditions of the Iraqi context, the necessary resources should be allocated for regular internal and cross-ministerial reflection and for the possible updating and adjustment of analyses and strategies. Looking ahead, the ministries should examine to what extent they can build up joint analysis capacities. In particular, the ministries should ensure that in future they will be able to respond flexibly to short-term surges in staffing needs in crisis contexts such as Iraq.

- 6. The ministries should promote cooperation at the implementation level by means of cross-ministry exchange and joint planning formats, paying due attention to adjacent policy areas.** In this way, they can ensure the complementarity, coherence and connectivity of measures during project planning and implementation.

Implementation notes: Particularly in the policy areas of stabilisation and peacebuilding, which span several budget lines, the ministries should strengthen cross-ministry exchange in thematic working groups, including by means of joint project visits at all levels. This presupposes that both the positioning and the objectives of stabilisation within the HDP nexus will be clarified, in the process of which the international debate on this issue will be taken into account. These issues should further be addressed by either designing or continuing and extending approaches for the coherent or complementary planning of measures. Approaches that facilitate the parallel funding of complementary projects from both ministries' budget lines (such as the Nexus Chapeau approach already in use in Iraq) offer great potential to ensure that BMZ projects are connected with those of the AA.

- 7. The ministries should pay more attention to the mainstreaming and implementation of cross-cutting issues such as human rights, conflict sensitivity, the environment and gender equality.** In this way, the quality and effectiveness of measures can be increased.

Implementation notes: This should be supported in both ministries in equal measure by explicitly formulating specific supplementary guidelines on conflict-sensitive practices, on supporting gender equality, on human rights and, of particular note, on environmental standards and climate sensitivity. Anchoring these more explicitly in the funding

guidelines for the various budget lines could also contribute. Another requirement is to ensure that the ministries and the implementation partners have cross-cutting capacities in place so that cross-cutting issues are indeed incorporated in all phases of the project cycle.

- 8. Depending on the nature of the ministry-specific measures, the ministries should ensure that final beneficiaries are given greater involvement in project formulation and implementation.** Taking local expertise and local needs into consideration can strengthen needs-based and goal-directed programme and project development and mitigate the risk of failing to address vulnerable populations appropriately, assuming that this is possible in the crisis context.

Implementation notes: The ministries should make use of the opportunities arising from context-appropriate participatory planning and implementation in spite of the challenges posed by Iraq's fragile statehood. To this end, the ministry officials responsible for planning and steering should work with their respective implementation partners to operationalise and duly apply the aspirations formulated in German and international policy documents (e.g. German government guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace"; Grand Bargain; 2030 Agenda), tailored to their instruments and the specific country context, and should make the necessary resources available to enable this.

- 9. The ministries should establish an impact-oriented, conflict- and gender-sensitive and aggregating monitoring system both at ministry-specific and joint ministerial strategic level, and make use of the resulting findings for steering.**

Implementation notes: The ministries should systematically collect and synthesise data on strategically relevant outputs and outcomes of the measures they have funded. To this end, it will be necessary to develop ministry-specific and joint ministerial SMART indicators – for example, on the basis of the reconstructed ministry-specific theories of change of the present evaluation. These monitoring data are the foundation for impact-oriented, conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive steering. At the working level, steering workshops should be held regularly for the purpose of reflecting on the impact assumptions, identifying structural challenges and adjusting strategic objectives if necessary. Because staff in Iraq have a limited radius of movement, the AA and the BMZ should examine whether it makes sense to support them with a third-party monitoring system, along similar lines as EU institutions are practising with success. The AA and the BMZ should make use of the regular formats in the context of GAAP to reflect on ministry-specific data and findings within the bigger picture, to engage in joint learning and to make steering adjustments if necessary. For objectives that are pursued by both ministries, such as rehabilitating social infrastructure or strengthening resilience, joint indicators should be developed. In order to implement these suggestions, the AA and BMZ divisions responsible for monitoring need to be appropriately staffed and financially resourced.

- 10. The ministries should make more effort to identify, systematically record and, if need be, evaluate potential unintended effects, especially unintended negative effects, and should go further than the instruments practised to date, such as Peace & Conflict Assessment (PCA) and Stabilisation Risk Analysis (SRA).** This will enable them to intervene with timely and proactive steering adjustments, and to learn lessons for their future engagement.

Implementation notes: Against the backdrop of Iraq's conflict-affected context, both the ministries and the implementing organisations should urgently ensure that they recognise and monitor not only intended effects but also the extent of unintended effects. Those involved in planning and implementation must be appropriately sensitised to – sometimes country-specific – unintended (negative) effects, because these will otherwise diminish positive effectiveness. Working jointly with those responsible for implementation, the ministries should establish or expand monitoring systems which

systematically record unintended effects and support regular joint reflection. Furthermore, external evaluations should be carried out at appropriate intervals which also systematically record and assess negative impacts of the overall engagement. In particular, any association of Germany's engagement with corruption and forms of sexual harassment, violence and exploitation should be promptly investigated in Iraq. Since this matter is of relevance to both actors, the AA and the BMZ should pursue a coordinated course of action which may also include some division of labour.