

Iraq launches National Adaptation Plan process for climate change resilience

Baghdad, 16 September 2020 – The Government of Iraq, in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), has launched a process to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to build the country's resilience to climate change.

The [NAP process](#) aims to reduce vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change, especially in developing countries, through strategic planning based on projections of future climate change. NAPs are seen as one of the most important mechanisms for adapting to climate change.

The three-year project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with over USD\$2.5m, will support Iraq to formulate and implement its NAP, with a particular focus on strengthening institutional, technical and financial capacities to ensure that medium- to long-term adaptation needs are integrated into national development planning.

The project launch event was held virtually on 16 September, in the presence of the Ministry of Health and Environment in Iraq, the Nationally Designated Authority (NDA) committee, representatives of other Iraqi ministries, the National Committee on Climate Change, local non-governmental organizations, and representatives from UN organizations working in the country.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Jasim Humadi, Deputy Minister of Health and Environment in Iraq and National Focal Point of GCF, said: "According to the [GEO-6 report](#) issued by UNEP, Iraq is classified as the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to decreased water and food availability and extreme temperatures, which will negatively affect food security, water security, social security and health security in Iraq. This project will support national efforts that focus on increasing Iraq's adaptive capacity, increasing the resilience of affected sectors, increasing the awareness and preparedness of rural communities, supporting youth and women, and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals."

A key aspect of Iraq's NAP process is to identify, assess and bridge existing gaps in climate knowledge, as these gaps constitute barriers to long-term climate planning across local, regional and national planning processes. Climate risk assessments will be carried out to identify the livelihoods and sectors most threatened by climate impacts, as well as the most urgent adaptation priorities.

UNEP's Regional Director and Representative in West Asia, Sami Dimassi, noted: "The impacts of climate change on development in Iraq are already being experienced. This new

project aims to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by strengthening the country's adaptive capacity and preparing the ground for future adaptation planning and projects. UNEP is proud to be the executing entity for the project and remains deeply committed to its core mandate of facilitating environmental governance and working with the Government of Iraq to ensure the NAP process allows for building back better."

Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, the UN Resident Coordinator for Iraq said: "The development of this National Adaptation Plan could not be more important for Iraq as it is a country highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The United Nations stands ready to assist Iraq to further strengthen institutional and technical capacities. We will make the best use of the mandates and expertise of our system to *deliver as one* today and beyond the lifespan of the project."

Climate change in Iraq is expected to reduce annual rainfall, which will lead to a surge in dust storms, a reduction in agricultural productivity, and increased water scarcity. These challenges are likely to have serious impacts on the health of the people of Iraq, as well as the agricultural and industry sectors, which contribute significantly to the Iraq's GDP.

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