

Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) Newsletter | April 2025



Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) an EU-funded initiative is a joint effort by UN-Habitat, the International Labour Organization, and the International Trade Centre. The programme aims to drive economic growth by creating decent job opportunities through advancing Iraq's affordable and sustainable housing initiatives and strengthening the construction sector.

During the first year, we've worked to address key challenges in the housing and construction sectors, mainly focusing on green practices, inclusive policies, and empowering vulnerable groups.

In this newsletter, you're invited to learn about BEIT's milestones, upcoming activities, and to stay updated with our project. Together, we can build the foundations for sustainable growth and prosperity in Iraq.

Sincerely,
The BEIT Project Team



Achievements at a Glance



2 Housing Pilot Sites Secured

UN-Habitat secured two green housing pilot sites in Mosul and Ramadi, promoting sustainable housing and climate resilience.



112 Inspectors Trained

ILO trained 112 women and men on labour inspection and occupational safety in the construction sector.



2 Research Conducted

ITC surveyed 900 consumers in six cities and assessed the competitiveness of 252 firms across four governorates.



1ST

Iraq's National Social Dialogue Forum launched.



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Spotlight Stories

Insights from the World Urban Forum



The BEIT project was showcased at the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, the largest global forum dedicated to housing, urban development, and sustainable human settlements. The Iraqi delegation highlighted the BEIT project's impact on Iraq's housing sector, emphasising the importance of establishing robust institutional frameworks to effectively shape housing policies and financing mechanisms.

The session featured a distinguished panel of experts including Mr Maher Johan, Deputy Minister of Planning for Technical Affairs, Iraq; Mr Ammar Musa Kazim, Mayor of the City of Baghdad; Mr Muslim Qazimi, Head of Country Programme, UN-Habitat Iraq; Mr Kif Nguyen, Deputy Head Fragile & Conflict Settings Market Development Unit, International Trade Centre (ITC); Mr Albert Uriyo, BEIT Project Manager, International Labour Organization (ILO); and Mr Sadiq Al-Fartusi, Director General of the Housing Directorate at Iraq's Ministry of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works. Discussions centred on BEIT's core objectives of driving inclusive economic growth, promoting job creation, and enhancing resilience to climate change.

A key theme addressed was aligning Iraq's national housing policies with international labour standards to improve working conditions in the construction sector, eradicate child labour, expand green and affordable housing solutions, and promote decent employment opportunities. Panellists emphasised enhancing the business environment by encouraging increased participation from local micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and attracting investors into Iraq's construction sector.

WUF12 welcomed **37,000** participants from **182** countries, marking its largest attendance to date. This year's forum highlighted community-led solutions to global challenges such as affordable housing and climate adaptation.





A New Era of Dialogue: Iraq Launches First National Social Dialogue Forum

In a landmark move, Iraq launched its first National Social Dialogue Forum—a permanent tripartite platform bringing together government, workers, and employers to shape inclusive labour policies. The Forum addresses a critical gap in labour governance, fostering consensus on key reforms, including a new trade union law.



This milestone builds on momentum from a high-level study visit to ILO headquarters in Geneva 3–5 September 2024, where Iraqi representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Parliament, the State Council, Cabinet, and national trade unions engaged with ILO experts to review technical guidance on labour law reform.

“We are fully committed to supporting this space, where all stakeholders can shape labour legislation through constructive dialogue,” said Mr. Hussein Arab, Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Committee. Supported by the ILO through the EU-funded BEIT Project, the Forum now drives legal reforms, aligns with international standards, and promotes social justice for all workers.



“This forum will serve as a permanent space where challenges can be addressed and reforms shaped collectively,”

Ahmed Al-Asadi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

Towards decent work and affordable housing in Iraq



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Vertical Gardens Transform Urban Spaces

In a country grappling with soaring temperatures and a lack of green spaces, three innovators, Yathrib Ali, Hozan Ahmed, and Dary Qaiz, joined forces at the EU-funded BEIT Green Home Hackathon (November 2024), organized by ITC in partnership with Mosul Space, to bring a powerful idea to life: GVI – Green Insulation and Ventilation.

From Idea to Impact

Inspired by her own experience, Yathrib shared:

“I lived in a small apartment with no garden, no insulation, and poor ventilation. My main goal was to increase green spaces and improve air quality.”



Her vision echoing the ancient Hanging Gardens of Babylon, sparked a sustainable solution: vertical gardens that cool buildings, filter air, and enhance urban landscapes.

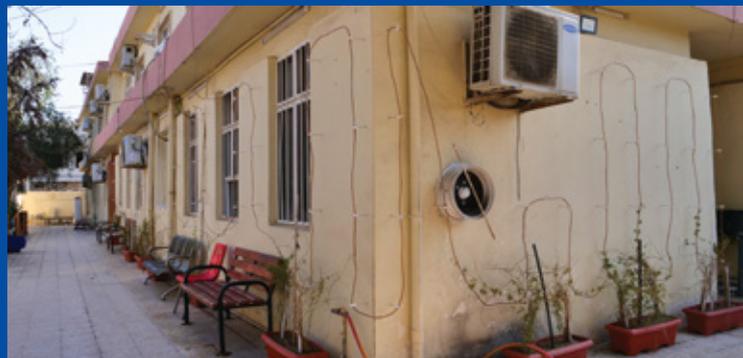
The GVI system reduces indoor temperatures by 5–4°C, using durable copper pipes, an automated irrigation system using filtered sink water, and hardy, fragrant jasmine plants that bloom year-round with minimal care.

Not only does it tackle heat, but it also lowers energy costs, boosts air quality, and brings life to otherwise bare walls. Their first prototype, which was installed at a nursing home for men in Mosul, immediately drew attention. GVI's vision for the future is Rooftop insulation with plants and Integration of solar energy for total self-sufficiency.

With every wall they green, GVI proves that sustainable, scalable change is not just possible but blooming.

“Don't overthink, just do it. Identify a problem, find solutions, and take action.”

– Yathrib Ali



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Building a Sustainable Future: Iraq's National Housing Policy Takes Shape

Iraq, in partnership with UN-Habitat, is taking a major step in addressing its housing challenges by developing a new National Housing Policy that prioritises sustainability, affordability, and long-term resilience. At a recent workshop in Baghdad, UN-Habitat, along with key government ministries, urban planners, and international partners, gathered to evaluate past policies and identify innovative solutions.



The discussions centered on improving housing accessibility, integrating green building practices, and strengthening urban resilience. The urgency was made clear by Mr. Lennart Deridder, Head of Cooperation from the EU Delegation to Iraq, who noted:

“With nearly a quarter of Iraq's population under 14, we must take action now to prepare for the future. Every family deserves a safe home with essential services, green spaces, and a healthy environment.”

A major focus of the policy is sustainability. With rising land costs and rapid urbanization, it is essential to integrate energy-efficient building designs, improved construction materials, and affordable housing finance models.

“Housing isn’t just about buildings—it’s about people,” said Muslim Qazimi, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq. “A strong housing sector strengthens communities, drives economic growth, and creates opportunities for a better future.”

Under BEIT, UN-Habitat will work with the Iraqi government to turn the policy into reality. Their Housing at the Centre approach positions housing as a human right and a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and social inclusion.



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Partner Contributions



- To tackle unemployment and improve infrastructure, Iraq began designing a National Public Works Programme through inclusive consultations and a high-level workshop.
- A policy brief is being developed in collaboration with the government to improve access to employment for women and youth, aiming to drive inclusive reforms and build a more resilient labour market.
- Twenty newly appointed labour inspectors were trained on ILO standards, Iraq's legal framework, and construction sector inspection. A follow-up workshop strengthened their knowledge of OSH procedures, labour clauses (ILO Convention No. 94), and sector-specific risks. In parallel, two strategic compliance workshops and a tripartite seminar engaged inspectors, employers, and workers to develop gender-responsive inspection policies and advance Iraq's first dedicated OSH draft law, with broad stakeholder participation and ILO support.



UN-HABITAT

- A sustainable housing design consultation workshop was offered to experts from Mosul and Ramadi, enabling them to contribute ideas and solutions to ensure climate-resilient, cost-effective housing tailored to community needs.
- Devised international best practice case study report on affordable housing finance.
- Conducted a capacity gap assessment and developed an affordable housing training curriculum.



- Two complementary reports shared key insights on Iraq's housing sector: the Market Report highlights rising demand for sustainable, climate-resilient housing in six cities, while the upcoming MSME Report analyzes data from offer policy recommendations for boosting MSME competitiveness and promoting energy-efficient solutions.
- A modular training curriculum was developed to equip youth and women with skills in sustainable housing and construction. Topics include solar energy, insulation, heritage-inspired design, and financial literacy— promoting climate resilience and private sector growth in Iraq.
- The BEIT Green Home Hackathon in Mosul brought together young innovators; two standout teams are now advancing scalable green housing solutions.

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Looking Ahead: Upcoming Activities

Publications

- Child Labour Assessment Research
- Housing Market and MSME Reports

Trainings

- Affordable Housing Training
- Neighbourhood Planning Training

Competitions

- Launch of the Green Home Design Competition
Get your ideas ready and join the competition!

Policy, Programme & Others

- Release of a Policy Brief on Women and Youth Participation
- Launch of the National Public Works Programme (NPWP) Roadmap
- OSH National Awareness Campaign
- National Symposium on Occupational Heat Stress in Iraq
- Establishment of the Green Home Fund
Follow ITC in Iraq updates for more details.

We extend our gratitude to the European Union for their generous support and to all our partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries for their collaboration.



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