

Advancing resilience and sustainability in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

GCCED Fragile States Portfolio 2026

Iraq — Water Governance and Climate Pressure

Snapshot: Population ~45 million | GDP per capita ~US\$5,500 | Fragility context: Climate-vulnerable post-conflict state | Region: Middle East

Integrated Context

Iraq's climate vulnerability is closely linked to water scarcity, rising temperatures, and land degradation across the Tigris–Euphrates basin. Declining river flows, upstream water developments, and inefficient irrigation systems have placed increasing pressure on agriculture and rural livelihoods. Southern regions are experiencing salinization of soils and freshwater systems, while dust storms and desertification are expanding in central and western areas.

Climate change is expected to intensify heatwaves and reduce precipitation, further stressing water resources and energy systems. Urban areas already face infrastructure constraints and environmental pollution. Addressing climate risks in Iraq therefore requires integrated water governance, agricultural adaptation, and environmental policy reform that can operate across fragmented institutions and regional water politics.

Key Climate and Environmental Challenges

- Reduced river flows and water scarcity
- Soil salinity and desertification
- Air pollution and dust storms
- Institutional fragmentation in water governance

GCCED Engagement Priorities

- Transboundary water cooperation
- Climate-resilient agriculture systems
- Renewable energy and energy diversification
- Environmental governance strengthening

Strategic Note

Iraq's climate resilience will depend on restoring water governance capacity while integrating agricultural adaptation and environmental policy reforms across national and regional levels.

SDG Alignment: 6 • 7 • 13 • 15 • 16