

## Prospects of Iraq's Maritime Openness and Their Effect on Its Economy

**Authors :** Mohanad Hammad

**Abstract :** Port institutions serve as a link connecting the land areas that receive the goods and the areas from where ships sail. These areas hold great significance for the conversion of goods into commodities of economic value, capable of meeting the needs of the society. Development of ports constitutes a fundamental component of the comprehensive economic development process. Recognizing this fact, developing countries have always resorted to this infrastructural element to resolve the numerous problems they face, taking into account its contribution to the reformation of their economic conditions. Iraqi ports have played a major role in boosting the commercial movement in Iraq, as they are the starting point of its oil exports and a key constituent in fulfilling the consumer and production needs of the various economic sectors of Iraq. With the Gulf wars and the economic blockade, Iraqi ports have continued to deteriorate and become unable to perform their functions as first-generation ports, prompting Iraq to use the ports of neighboring countries such as Jordan's Aqaba commercial port. Meanwhile, Iraqi ports face strong competition from the ports of neighboring countries, which have achieved progress and advancement as opposed to the declining performance and efficiency of Iraqi ports. The great developments in the economic conditions of Iraq lay a too great burden on the Iraqi maritime transport and ports, which require development in order to be able to meet the challenges arising from the fierce international and regional competition in the markets. Therefore, it is necessary to find appropriate solutions in support of the role that can be played by Iraqi ports in serving Iraq's foreign trade transported by sea and in keeping up with the development of foreign trade. Thus, this research aims at tackling the current situation of the Iraqi ports and their commercial activity and studying the problems and obstacles they face. The research also studies the future prospects of these ports, the potentials of maritime openness to Iraq under the fierce competition of neighboring ports, and the possibility of enhancing Iraqi ports' competitiveness. Among the results produced by this research is the future scenario it proposes for Iraqi ports, mainly represented in the establishment of Al-Faw Port, which will contribute to a greater openness of maritime transport in Iraq, and the rehabilitation and expansion of existing ports. This research seeks to develop solutions to Iraq ports so that they can be repositioned as a vital means of promoting economic development.

**Keywords :** maritime transport, port, future prospects, regional integration

**Conference Title :** ICMT 2018 : International Conference on Maritime Transport

**Conference Location :** Venice, Italy

**Conference Dates :** November 14-15, 2018