



SUCCESS STORY

Nation's First News Agency Opens

Journalists start Iraq's first national news agency



Photo: USAID

Agency chiefs discuss operational strategy as they prepare to launch Iraq's first news agency.

USAID helped launch Iraq's first independent news agency, offering technical assistance and training and equipping its Baghdad headquarters with the technology necessary to run a top-rate agency.

As media outlets in Iraq proliferated, a group of Iraqi journalists recognized a need for a professional, nationwide news agency. In October 2005, they launched the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) with assistance from USAID. The news agency's goal is to help Iraqi media outlets provide their audiences with impartial, accurate information.

"Iraq needs an independent, professional news agency," said Dr. Ayer, a veteran reporter and co-founder of NINA. "Creating NINA is a challenge, but we believe the agency will grow and become a service very needed by the media."

NINA offers news and features on the country's political, economic, and social life in Arabic. The agency is striving to become synonymous with fair, honest, and reliable reporting that Iraqis can trust amid a media landscape overflowing with information — some accurate and some unverifiable.

The media professionals who own and operate NINA have been consulting with experienced international news agency managers as they build their agency. USAID has provided technical assistance to the agency and has been training NINA journalists in writing and editing skills and international media standards. USAID also equipped the agency's headquarters in Baghdad with the latest news-gathering, editing, and transmission equipment.

NINA has hired full-time correspondents in Erbil, Hilla, Basra, and the International Zone in Baghdad, as well as freelance reporters in other parts of the country.

NINA is an important part of USAID's strategy for strengthening independent media in Iraq. The goal of the program is to develop media outlets throughout the country that provide accurate, high quality information to their audiences. Through skills training and business development assistance, as well as media law advocacy, USAID is building the foundation for an independent, credible media to grow and flourish in Iraq.