SUCCESS STORIES

Looking Towards the Future

Restoring Iraq's Agricultural Sector

Creating sustainable growth by repairing equipment and training for the future

The scarcity of operational equipment is one of the major obstacles to increasing Iraq's agricultural productivity, particularly for wheat production. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and two American providers – Case New Holland (CNH) and Massey Ferguson – USAID is training Iraqi mechanics and working to rehabilitate at least 5,000 inoperable tractors by September 2006. To date, 1,543 tractors have been repaired in workshops located around Iraq.

By restoring essential equipment and training Iraqi mechanics, the tractor repair program will help drive sustainable, economic growth of Iraq's agricultural sector. The program will help build capacity in the agricultural sector and establish a foundation further sustainable job creation. Tractor repair will allow farmers to produce 67,500 metric tons of additional wheat for the domestic market, generating over $4.7 million in annual grain sales, and allowing up to $5,400/ tractor annually in contract services.

RESTORING KEY MACHINERY

USAID has partnered with CNH and Massey Ferguson – whose brands which make up a large share of agricultural machinery in Iraq – to establish 14 workshops countrywide. Staffed by 180 trained Iraqi mechanics and using American international distribution and supply channels, these repair facilities serve Iraq's wheat producing regions: Baghdad, Dohuk, Ninewa, Erbil, Wassit, and Sulaymaniyah governorates.

By September 2006, the program will restore at least 5,000 inoperable tractors, many of which are decades old and have received little maintenance. Tractor owners are now bringing their machines into the workshops for repairs ranging from engine and transmission overhauls to the replacement of brakes and starter motors. Upon completion of repairs, provided at no cost to the owners, the tractors will be returned to the farmers for use.

The completed rehabilitation of these 5,000 tractors will benefit both farmers, who will earn increased revenue from greater production due to expanded and improved cultivation, as well as tractor owners, who will earn increased service revenue from contract services. The program will expand cultivated lands by approximately 45,000 hectares and allow for more intensive and timely cultivation of existing land. In all, the program will help produce 67,500 metric tons of additional wheat, generating over $4.7 million in annual grain sales, and allowing for $5,400/ tractor annually in contract services.

Mechanics at one of 14 workshops around the country repair a tractor as part of USAID's tractor repair program. The 180 Iraqis employed at the workshops will continue to provide tractor repair services after the end of the project.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

In addition to repairing existing tractors, USAID's tractor rehabilitation program will add to the foundation for sustainable, private sector growth in agriculture by establishing a countrywide network of privately owned repair shops and trained Iraqi mechanics. The 14 CNH and Massey Ferguson workshops – including the 180 Iraqi mechanics currently

SUCCESS STORY

Anti-Corruption Efforts Undeterred in Anbar

USAID is building the capacity of local Iraqis to fight corruption in their own communities

At a workshop in Anbar governorate, an Iraqi trained by ICSP discussed corruption and proposed measures the community could take to combat the problem.

As the military works to expel the foreign combatants and combat the insurgents, ICSP and a local organization have partnered to address other factors that fuel the violence, including corruption throughout the province.

Ultimately, the stability of these communities hinges on a transparent system of government that is accountable to the Iraqi people.

When a Fallujah-based civil society organization wanted to offer more training in Anbar governorate, it did not let a day of particularly fierce violence in December affect its plans. While US and Iraqi forces battled insurgents nearby, the organization's trainer continued with the lesson plan that he had developed with assistance from USAID's Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP). To their staff, the turmoil in Anbar was not a deterrent but a reality that underscored the need for broader anti-corruption training for Iraqis throughout the province.

Local Iraqis see these anti-corruption workshops, focusing on awareness raising tools and other anti-corruption strategies, as a key to long-term stability in their community. While some of the money secured through corruption fills the pockets of government officials, some funds make their way to terrorists. By fighting corruption, this organization is promoting security as well as integrity in government.

Over several months, Iraqi representatives attended ICSP workshops, where USAID specialists shared international anti-corruption techniques and helped the group design a strategy to fight corruption in its community. One of these workshops outlined the legal measures that different civil society organizations have used in other countries to stem corruption. After months of working with ICSP to build capacity, the group applied for and won a grant for eight workshops across Anbar. The need for the training was particularly acute in the smaller villages, areas often neglected in an effort to reach larger, more prominent neighbors. Using their network of contacts, the Iraqi organization solicited participants interested in learning how to combat corruption.

The eight workshops were attended by a total of 225 people, all of them distinguished within the communities, including religious and tribal leaders, lawyers, college professors, and government officials. The distinctive characteristic of this project was that each workshop developed an action plan and elected a working committee headed by a tribal leader to follow-up the decisions of the group with the provincial government.

Each workshop produced different follow-up measures, focusing on meeting the needs of each community. Following one workshop, an eight-member committee was formed to investigate possible illegitimate arrangements at a nearby fuel station and distribution center. In another city, the committee decided to monitor the municipality and its activities. This idea of converting awareness-raising efforts into advocacy activities is being adapted more broadly within the ICSP anti-corruption program.

SUCCESS STORY
New Customs Modernization Plan Adopted

Iraqi Minister of Finance, Ali Allawi on Feb. 21 gave his written approval for adopting a multi-year Customs Modernization Plan for Iraq, building on extensive support from USAID. The International Monetary Fund's stand-by arrangement with the Government of Iraq (GOI) calls for extensive customs reforms. The Economic Governance II Project, assisting the Iraqi government in the economic reconstruction and policy reform in Iraq, has been working with the Ministry of Finance and General Commission for Customs (GCC) to help build institutional capacity and develop modern systems.

This multi-year plan provides important steps in assisting the GCC to improve, simplify and streamline customs services to importers and travelers, while reducing opportunities for corruption.

Years of neglect and failed reorganizations have left Iraq's customs service workers demoralized, under-equipped and inadequately trained. A revitalized system, capable of vigorously supporting border security, collecting government revenues and providing a modern streamlined trade administration, are viewed both nationally and internationally as essential to economic stability in Iraq.

As a result, USAID assisted the GOI in developing the Customs Modernization Plan to help address these pressing customs reforms that are necessary in rebuilding the economic infrastructure in Iraq. Establishing a modernized, internationally accepted customs regime has been priorities for the USAID Project. Such a modern customs service, also capable of meeting the international standards of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Customs Organization (WCO), is essential to Iraq's sustained revenue collection and international trade management. The changes will promote an increase of the Iraq's non-oil revenues and contribute to transparent customs practices.

With the minister's approval of the Customs Modernization Plan, the GCC now has the mandate and authority to take the critical steps in customs reform, continuing to take more ownership of the progress that has been made by the USAID project. Some components of the plan include formulation of new legislation and procedures compatible with WTO/WCO standards; a new customs tariff; organizational restructuring and a human resources plan aimed at recruiting and maintaining qualified staff; a new ethics program based on WCO guidelines; new national enforcement strategy based on intelligence gathering, profiling, risk management and anti-smuggling guidelines; international trade facilitation; and the implementation of a national computerized customs system.

With the assistance of USAID, the Customs Modernization Plan will now enable the GCC to improve and simplify customs services to importers and travelers and develop a compliance system based on risk management profiles to speed the release times for goods. The longer-term objectives of the GCC will be to bring customs service to a level where it has both the capacity and the means to collect, in addition to duties on imports, other potential government levies such as sales taxes, VAT taxes, or excise duties.

THE ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE II PROGRAM

The Economic Governance II program continues reforms in tax, fiscal, legal, institutional, and regulatory frameworks. In coordination with the Ministry of Finance, USAID helps policy makers formulate and implement policy decisions based on international best practices. Capacity building efforts at the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) are helping expand the ability of the CBI to develop and monitor an effective monetary policy, strengthen its supervisory role, and modernize banking operations. At the same time, assistance is being provided to the electricity and communications industries, as well as other relevant government ministries. USAID technical assistance also supports the development of a reliable social safety net, ensuring assistance to displaced workers and the provision of sustainable pension benefits.

Fighting Corruption Through Civil Society
Helping build local capacity to advance transparent and accountable governance

Since 2004, the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) has worked with civil society groups throughout Iraq, building local capacity to combat corruption and promote transparent and responsive local governance. Emphasizing transparency in public institutions, ICSP has provided training, technical assistance, and grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) as they conduct nationwide awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts. As a result of these activities, anti-corruption program activities have broken new ground in Iraq.

ICSP and local anti-corruption efforts have received national attention. After government officials attended an ICSP-funded workshop conducted by *Iraqi Center for Administrative Anti-Corruption* at the Petroleum Culture Center, Iraqi Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jafari praised the efforts of ICSP. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani pledged support to the efforts of a local, USAID-supported group, including the translation of anti-corruption materials into Kurdish.

INCREASED LOCAL CAPACITY

A special emphasis is placed on giving Iraqi CSOs the necessary skills to independently conduct effective awareness raising campaigns, effective tools in the fight against corruption.

- More than **700 CSOs have increased their knowledge and capacity** to undertake anti-corruption work as a result of **128 training workshops and 773 technical assistance sessions**

- ICSP also supported **nine forums involving 350 participants from the civil society sector** to network and plan joint activities.

- ICSP and partner CSOs have provided **training to 6,000 government officials** at the national, regional, and local levels, and provided of cutting-edge mentoring and technical assistance in transparency and accountability*.*

NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The ICSP **Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising Campaign**—comprising print media (posters, banners, signs, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, and billboards) and the work of Iraqi artists (mobile theaters, art exhibitions, and cartoon displays)—has **reached an estimated 1 million Iraqis to date.** Weekly anti-corruption TV and radio programs were highly visible and effective CSO initiatives to expose corruption and waste, and hold government accountable to the Iraqi people.

IRAQI WATCHDOG GROUPS

ICSP has nurtured the **establishment and effective operation of more than 40 Iraqi watchdog organizations** across the country. These groups have conducted anti-corruption surveys, monitored and reported on corruption, trained government officials in transparency and accountability techniques.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The USAID Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) has been active in Iraq since September 2004. USAID's implementing partners include America's Development Foundation (ADF) and, focusing on independent media, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

The civil society component focuses on establishing civil society resource centers and building the capacity of Iraqi civil society organizations to be effective public actors. Special targeted assistance supports work in civic education, women's advocacy, anticorruption, and human rights.

USAID: Civil Society and Media Development
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/civsoc.html

USAID: Fighting Corruption
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/technical_areas/anti-corruption/

USAID/Iraq
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Civil Society Resource Centers

- Conducted 1,144 training workshops followed by technical assistance to develop CSO core capacities
- Led 275 Forums and 30 National and Regional Conferences, bringing CSOs together
- 3,000 CSOs have received training and technical assistance
- 43,000 CSO participants have increased their knowledge, skills and operations
- 6,000 government officials have been trained and/or participated in workshops, forums, and conferences.

Anticorruption

- Supported CSOs lobbying for the addition of 13 anticorruption provisions to the Iraqi Constitution
- 6,000 government officials—at the national, regional, and local levels—received training and technical assistance in transparency and accountability
- Reached 1 million Iraqis through a national awareness raising campaign featuring innovative programs by Iraqi organizations

Women's Advocacy

- Supported women's rights CSOs lobbying for the adoption of 12 constitutional provisions benefiting women
- Over 600 CSOs have received training and assistance, increasing their capacity to advocate for the advancement of women;
- Led events and conferences, bringing women's CSOs together to network, organize coalitions, and develop advocacy campaigns

Human Rights

- Over 4,000 CSO and government employees received training and technical assistance on human rights
- Many CSOs have improved their abilities to monitor and report on human rights abuses, including poor conditions of detention centers and unlawful detention
- CSOs have developed partnerships with police departments, human rights departments and other government agencies to support the protection of human rights

Civic Education

- Assisted CSOs who mobilized citizens to participate in Iraq's constitutional referendum and the electoral processes
- Hundreds of CSOs have participated in regional and national conferences to advocate for civil society legislation
- Supported Iraqi-driven campaigns to reform inadequate laws affecting women

Independent Media

- Helped establish and continues to help build the capacity of the first independent news agency and the first independent Public Broadcasting Service in the Arab world
- Increased the knowledge and skills of over 1,000 journalists and media professionals
- Established an Iraqi media watchdog group

ADVOCACY FOR ENHANCED ANTI-CORRUPTION

Nearly **80 CSOs successfully advocated for the adoption of 13 anti-corruption provisions** in the Iraqi Constitution. Leading up to the *National Conference on Incorporating Transparency and Accountability in the Iraqi Constitution* in July 2005, the ICSP held a number of Anti-Corruption activities, including preparatory workshops and the regional conferences on transparency and accountability in the Iraqi constitution. The regional conferences enjoyed local, national, and international media coverage. The conference was the driving force behind the inclusion of key anti corruption principles in the Iraqi constitution.

ICSP and CSOs are conducting **important advocacy on anti-corruption issues**, coordinating with Iraq's major public integrity agency, the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI), and working for legislative reform on access to information legislation, establishment of a public integrity agency, and whistleblower protection legislation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

ICSP Partner CSOs have improved mechanisms to secure transparency and accountability in the public sector through constitutional work, legal reform efforts, and establishment of CSO-public partnerships providing training and advocacy to a wide array of government agencies, including the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI), government ministries, parliament, provincial councils, ministry directorates, local governments, hospitals, schools, and universities.

Iraqis have presented anti-corruption workshops in a variety of government agencies including city halls, ministry directorates of Health and Education in several governorates, government employees from health, education, culture, finance, housing, and social affairs ministries, communications officials in one governorate and health workers in another, government media workers, and workers at the national ministries of Industry and Municipalities. CSOs continue to cultivate **CSO-public partnerships** that facilitate training in government agencies and advocacy work
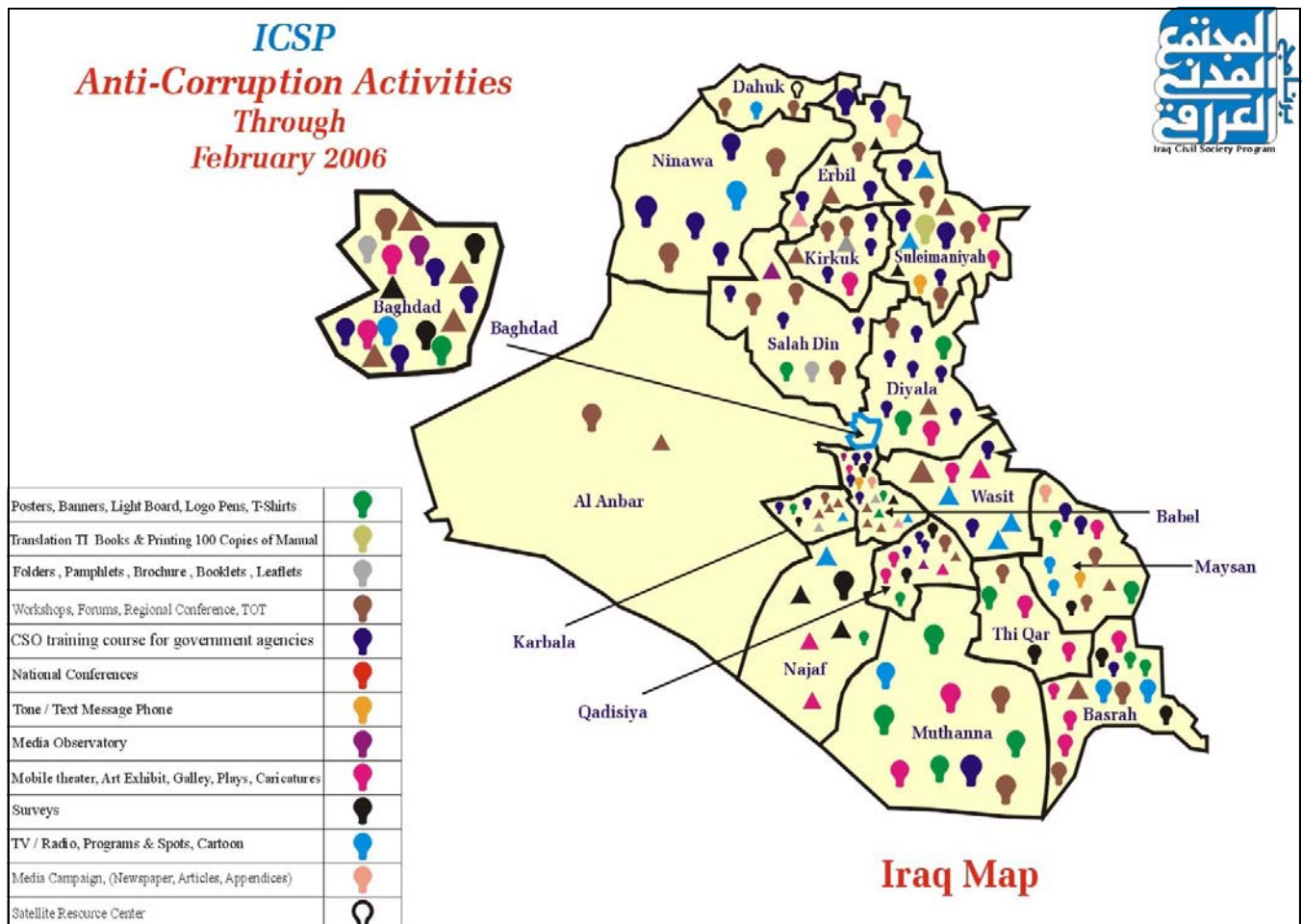
CSOs have conducted **public opinion and satisfaction polls** as part of documentation of corruption in ports, hospitals, schools, the food basket program and other public programs and institutions. These polls provide the basis for **anti-corruption campaigns**. For example, a partner CSO has conducted customer surveys documenting corruption in the food basket program of the Ministry of Trade. Follow up advocacy to improve delivery of services is leading to increased public awareness and participation, administrative reform, and reduction of corruption and waste.

ICSP supports a popular **anti-corruption TV program**, in which cases of administrative corruption are exposed. Iraqi viewers and even government officials praise the program. Other ICSP programs have led to corrupt or unresponsive officials being removed from office and in subsequent improvement in management and public service delivery. Iraqi viewers and even government officials praise the program.

Several CSOs have used **artistic models as part of an integrated plan to battle corruption**, including dramas that deal with administrative corruption in government offices and "The Opera House Injuries", mobile caricature galleries and an exhibition of cartoon strips in newspapers and other venues. The cartoons were designed as part of a simple study conducted by the CSO that described the types of corruption and waste occurring in government agencies.

Upon learning of some of these ICSP-funded anti-corruption projects one central Iraqi governor pledged his support for the local groups and the Anti-Corruption campaign in an official letter. Governors and public officials are frequent participants in ICSP programs.

ICSP
Anti-Corruption Activities
Through
February 2006

Iraq Map

Posters, Banners, Light Board, Logo Pens, T-Shirts	
Translation TI Books & Printing 100 Copies of Manual	
Folders , Pamphlets , Brochure , Booklets , Leaflets	
Workshops, Forums, Regional Conference, TOT	
CSO training course for government agencies	
National Conferences	
Tone / Text Message Phone	
Media Observatory	
Mobile theater, Art Exhibit, Galley, Plays, Caricatures	
Surveys	
TV / Radio, Programs & Spots, Cartoon	
Media Campaign, (Newspaper, Articles, Appendices)	
Satellite Resource Center	

Civil Society Resource Centers

USAID's centers provide essential support to Iraqi civil society groups nationwide

The USAID strategy for civil society development in Iraq supports the establishment of an informed, sustainable, and active Iraqi civil society that effectively and responsibly participates within a democratic system of governance. Since 2004, the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) has worked with civil society groups throughout Iraq, helping build local capacity to advance civic education, women's advocacy, anti-corruption, and human rights.

Civil Society Resource Centers have been established to contribute to civil society strengthening throughout Iraq. These Iraqi-staffed centers serve as hubs for training, technical assistance, and grant activities to develop the capacity of civil society organizations. Also, the centers serve as an important source of information and an organizing force in assembling civil society coalitions and advocacy efforts. In addition to providing a full range of capacity building assistance to civil society organizations, the Centers provide specialized services and support to groups engaged in civic education and other essential activities.

ESTABLISHING SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE CENTERS

USAID established four Civil Society Resource Centers in December 2004. Through ICSP, USAID provided extensive support to training Iraqi managers and trainers who now staff the centers, enabling them to provide training, technical assistance and grants to civil society organizations across all of Iraq. Located in Baghdad (serving the central region), Basrah (south), Erbil (north) and Hilla (south-central), these Resource Centers provide effective support to civil society groups across the country.

The demand for services at the Civil Society Resource Centers remains high, often surpassing capacity. **Each center provides services to an average of 750 civil society organizations** and 1,000 other institutions through its networking and coalition building activities. Each center maintains an extensive resources library on civil society development in Arabic, Kurdish, and English. To date, the Civil Society Resource Centers have **sponsored 254 regional and national conferences and forums** that brought civil society groups together to examine key issues and develop a common plan of action. The four centers have **provided direct services to over 3,000 civil society groups** to date.

To remain responsive to the needs of local communities, each center has established a community advisory board that consults with area civil society groups and other stakeholders. These advisory boards will assist the centers in developing sustainability plans, helping them operate independently.

PROVIDING ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

To encourage institutional development, the Civil Society Resource Centers conduct organizational assessments of local civil society organizations using the well-established Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT). This tool, combined with related technical assistance, enables ICSP and civil society groups to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to tailor technical assistance to meet those needs. During the first year of operation, ICSP **assessed the institutional capacity of 1,200 civil society groups** for sound management, advocacy, and internal governance. ICSP is currently re-evaluating 61 civil society groups to track institutional development, and

IRAQ CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Anticorruption
- Supported civil society groups lobbying for the addition of 13 anticorruption provisions to the Iraqi Constitution
- 6,000 government officials—at the national, regional, and local levels—received training and technical assistance in transparency and accountability
- Reached 1 million Iraqis through a national awareness raising campaign featuring innovative programs by Iraqi organizations

Women's Advocacy
- Supported women's rights groups lobbying for the adoption of 12 constitutional provisions benefiting women
- Over 600 civil society organizations have received training and assistance, increasing their capacity to advocate for the advancement of women
- Led events and conferences, bringing women's advocacy organizations together to network, organize coalitions, and develop advocacy campaigns

Human Rights
- Over 4,000 civil society groups and government employees received training and technical assistance on human rights
- Many civil society organizations have improved their abilities to monitor and report on human rights abuses, including poor conditions of detention centers and unlawful detention
- Civil society organizations have developed partnerships with police departments, human rights departments and other government agencies to support the protection of human rights

Civic Education
- Assisted groups who mobilized citizens to participate in Iraq's constitutional referendum and the electoral processes
- Hundreds of Iraqi groups have participated in regional and national conferences to advocate for civil society legislation
- Supported Iraqi-driven campaigns to reform inadequate laws affecting women

Independent Media
- Helped establish and continues to help build the capacity of the first independent news agency and the first independent public broadcasting service in the Arab world
- Increased the knowledge and skills of over 1,000 journalists and media professionals
- Established an Iraqi media watchdog group

encourages multiple evaluations to track organizational development.

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

Each Civil Society Resource Center provides training workshops and technical assistance to build the capacity of Iraqi civil society groups. These services cover a range of topics including financial management, project management, strategic planning, project design/proposal writing, advocacy/networking, internal governance, and report writing. Since the start of the program ICSP has **provided 422 training workshops in core capacity areas and an additional 722 training workshops in sector-specific topics**. Over 27,000 Iraqis have participated in these workshops, and an additional 2,450 civil society clients have benefited from specific technical assistance and training.

GRANTS PROGRAM

The Civil Society Resource Centers provide and manage grants to civil society groups to reinforce training and technical assistance activities, and to support advocacy and public awareness projects. Over the past year, the centers have greatly improved their ability to manage and administer grants, and now provide an array of support, including small, rapid grants. In the past 18 months, ICSP has **awarded 391 grants to support the activities of 314 civil society groups**. These grants are designed to be appropriate to the mission and capabilities of each organization.

BUILDING NEW RESOURCES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Civil Society Resource Centers also develop the capacity of capable "key" local groups to serve as resources for other organizations. These civil society groups have received training in how to facilitate capacity building workshops, using a training-of-trainers methodology. Centers also work with key groups to implement training and technical assistance to Iraqis that are too remote or cannot normally be reached by the center. The four regional Civil Society Resource Centers have been the hub of training and civil society support that reaches tens of thousands of Iraqis countrywide.

SUCCESS STORY

Supporting Women in Traditional Communities

USAID supports the growth of a vibrant, politically active civil society across Iraq.

ICSP trainer Zeinab explains the role of women in the constitution.

ICSP must overcome numerous obstacles as it works to develop capable women leaders and build a network of civil society organizations that will continue to advocate for the rights of women. ICSP is making significant progress on all fronts, including dismantling age-old perceptions about women's role in society.

Through training, forums, workshops, and awareness-raising activities, ICSP is succeeding case by case and village by village.

When Zeinab, a trainer from USAID's Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP), arrived at the small village in the weeks before the constitutional referendum, she was shocked by the audience that assembled for her two-day workshop. Attending her training, *Women's Rights in the New Constitution,* were two dozen men, but not a single woman. The sheikh who helped arrange the training offered an explanation: In some villages women attend these sorts of events. But this village is more traditional, he explained, and women are expected to remain at home.

Located on the outskirts of Karbala, the village has just over a thousand inhabitants. Agriculture forms the basis of the economy, and most of the land is used for date farming. Zeinab targeted this particular village as part of an effort to reach as many women as possible, especially in remote areas.

Though she was disappointed, Zeinab knew that pleading with the sheikh to change his mind would be futile. She decided to proceed with her training and began by outlining the course and defining the terms that she would be using. The men listened attentively as she continued through the lesson plan. After an hour, she gently posed a question, **"Would it be all right if the men allowed their wives to attend the workshop?"** The men agreed. There was plenty of space on the carpet, so the women could sit separately and still participate.

Zeinab asked that the group take a break and waited for the women to arrive. When the workshop resumed, there were more than 20 women. The following day, among the 45 participants, the women outnumbered the men.

The training was a unique experience for these women who work as housewives and mothers. They were excited by the material that Zeinab presented. Using a course from the ICSP-designed Women's Advocacy curriculum, Zeinab covered the international women's agreements and how these related to the articles on women's rights in the new constitution (especially the personal status law). Zeinab discussed the role that women's advocacy groups could play in changing the position of women in Iraq and how the constitution supported this changing role. After the lecture, two of the women asked if they too could work to advance the rights of women. Zeinab connected the women to an ICSP-partner civil society organization. The two women are now members.

Reconnecting Iraq: Telecommunications
Completion of the nationwide Consolidated Fiber Network project

On June 13th, a new fiber optic communications link became fully operational, connecting a major southern power station to the Southern Regional Control Center and to the National Dispatch Control Center in Baghdad. This success marks the completion of the Consolidated Fiber Network (CFN), a nationwide effort that **will support** the reliability of telephone and electricity service in Iraq.

Since **January** 2005, USAID has worked to **complete** the **$70 million** CFN project by connecting the Ministry of Electricity (ME) to the Iraqi Telephone and Postal Company's (ITPC - a government agency under the Ministry of Communications) fiber optic network. The CFN allows ME officials to monitor and control their electrical grid from a central location helping to reduce blackouts and uncontrolled disruptions.

In addition to installing new fiber optic connections, USAID's CFN program provided the ME with voice communications and data transmission equipment. Based on the latest technology, this equipment will allow the ME to communicate easily between their remote sites and control centers, as well as utilize their own Supervisory, Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) equipment. SCADA, a system for process control, gathers real time data from remote locations in order to control the power line equipment and power line grid. The new CFN fiber optic network will be owned and controlled by the ITPC while the voice and data transmission equipment is owned and controlled by the ME. Both Ministries are beneficiaries of this new network and both have a stake in keeping the network operational. To ensure a sustainable system, the CFN effort included extensive training for both ministries' staff in the operation and maintenance of the new equipment.

The CFN project also reinforced other parts of USAID's work in telecommunications, improving existing ITPC fiber optic national communications "backbone" by repairing breaks and replacing damaged parts. Additionally, USAID provided construction and testing equipment—with the appropriate training—to support operations and maintenance.

RESTORING COMMUNICATIONS

Prior to the conflict, 1.2 million Iraqis subscribed to landline telephone service and much of the tele-

Since early 2003, telephone subscriptions in Iraq have increased almost eight-fold, rising from 1.2 million land lines and virtually no cell phones to 8.2 million land and cell phone subscribers. USAID has worked extensively to restore and expand Iraq's vital telecommunications network, connecting government agencies, businesses, and Iraqi citizens to each other throughout the country and to the outside world. In 2004, emergency repairs to the wired network reconnected 20 major cities and 70 percent of Iraqi subscribers. Key equipment was replaced and expanded. Iraqi engineers also received the training necessary to operate and maintain the equipment.

ABOVE: Iraqi workers help rewire a transmission tower and the local telecommunications network equipment.

USAID'S CONSOLIDATED FIBER NEWTWORK (CFN)

- Assessments began in February 2005 and physical construction began in October 2005.

- Installed 380km of fiber optic cable to connect 37 ME remote sites with two Regional Control Centers and the National Dispatch Center in Baghdad.

- Replaced 300km of fiber for 11 ITPC backbone routes.

- Repaired 1,280 fiber optic cable splices along 1100km of existing ITPC fiber optic backbone.

- Provided the ITPC with replacement DWDM cards to reactivate the southern Euphrates fiber optic backbone link. The cards were critical to the redundant operation of the ITPC southern network.

- Installed data transport systems at 37 remote ME sites and three control centers. Connected the sites to the newly installed fiber optic cable.

- Provided data transport equipment to support expansion efforts to an additional 20 remote sites.

- Provided the ME with 183km fiber optic cable, 10 microwave radios, and 10 satellite transceivers to support efforts to connect the 20 remote sites.

- Installed telephone PABX switches at 33 remote sites. Provided the ME with telephone PABX switches to install at 11 remote sites.

- Provided the ME with fiber optic test equipment, microwave test equipment, and hand tools.

- Provided the ITPC with fiber optic test and repair equipment and large quantities of construction equipment needed to install fiber optic cables. This included several sophisticated construction trenchers, backhoes, and cable splicing trailers.

- 4,317 hours of training were provided for both the ME and ITPC including: classroom training for the new fiber optic test and repair equipment; classroom and field training on the operation and maintenance of the construction equipment; and classroom and hands on training of the data and PABX equipment.

- Provided one year spare parts for all equipment.

- Costs for the spare parts and test equipment, ITPC construction equipment, ITPC DWDM cards and rolling stock was over $3.9M.

communication network was centralized in Baghdad. However, many of the network's switches were damaged during the conflict and service was disrupted. In Baghdad, 12 telephone exchange switches (out of 38 total) serving 240,000 out of 540,000 telephone lines were out of service. These switches connect main telephone trunk lines to individual consumer lines.

As part of USAID's effort to restore critical infrastructure and services, USAID's partner worked primarily with the ITPC to restore the national fiber optic telecommunications network, repair the telephone switching system in Baghdad, and restore international telecommunications capability. USAID relied on ITPC personnel to perform much of the reconstruction activities and handed over operations and maintenance of all switch sites to the Government of Iraq in mid-March 2004.

In restoring country-wide communications infrastructure, USAID and implementing partners:

- **Audited more than 1,200 km of fiber optic cable** that formed the national backbone communications network.

- Performed emergency repairs to the national fiber optic network from Mosul to Umm Qasr, **connecting 20 cities to Baghdad and the 70 percent of Iraqis** that have landline telephone accounts.

- Purchased tools, equipment, and parts and provided management oversight to assist ITPC in the restoration of the fiber optic network.

- Replaced obsolete transmission equipment between Baghdad and Basrah in collaboration with the ITPC.

- **Installed a satellite gateway system** restoring international calling service in December 2003.

- **Created a client and revenue stream for the ITPC by connecting the ME CFN network to the ITPC fiber optic network. This will allow both the ITPC and ME to work in parallel as customer and client and to rely on each other for the benefits each provide.**

Additionally, USAID trained Iraqi ITPC engineers and technicians to operate and maintain the satellite gateway system and the new telephone switches, helping ensure long-term sustainability and future growth as Iraq reconnects to the world.

USAID Support to Iraqi Women
Celebrating International Women's Day, 2006

Support for women's rights and increased access to political and economic activities encompasses virtually all USAID's efforts in Iraq. Through USAID support and capacity building activities, Iraqi women have strengthened their political voice and continued to improve their economic status. Girls are beginning to return to primary schools and women have gained greater access to primary health care. Iraqi women entrepreneurs, business leaders, and professionals have drawn on USAID programs to ensure that they benefit from increased economic growth and increased capacity building. Female politicians and grassroots organizations countrywide have partnered with USAID to advocate women's interests and advance equality.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Programs support Iraqi women as entrepreneurs, employees, business leaders, and professionals. Nearly 60 percent of USAID's small business grants have been awarded to women. Female Central Bank officers were trained in best practices for accounting, banking, and oversight; giving women a stronger position from which to guide bank reform.

A new, nationwide microfinance program has been initiated to provide access to credit for Iraq's micro, small and medium enterprises. Over $12 million in grants have been given to fund this program. Training and capacity building efforts, developed in coordination, will help expand access to credit and lay the foundation for sustainable growth.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

USAID's support to civil society includes training and capacity building for women's organization so that they can engage in public debates about the continuing evolution of the role of women in Iraqi society. USAID provided a $500,000 grant to the Rafadin

Women's Coalition comprised of more than 30 women's organizations to launch conferences, leaflet distribution, and media and television spots promoting women's rights in a constitutional democracy. This and other assistance helped to elect 68 women to the new Iraqi Council of Representatives in the 15 December 2005 elections.

At the local level, USAID helped to increase

The ASUDA Organization for Combating Violence Against Women - an Iraqi civil society organization based in Sulaymaniyah governorate - has received a support from USAID's Local Governance Programs.

female provincial council participation by 25 percent and has set similar targets for the municipal and provincial elections anticipated in late 2006 or early 2007. USAID's Community Action Program (CAP) supports initiatives that address the immediate needs of Iraqi women. Of the 4,000 completed projects, 500 projects directly benefited women with another one-third indirectly benefiting women.

EDUCATION

USAID's education programs are increasing the enrollment of girls in school, thus reducing the substantial gender gap in primary school enrollment and increasing girl's literacy in rural areas. USAID's accelerated learning program condenses six school years into three, allowing girls who had not

USAID/Iraq Celebrates International Women's Day

Northern region: USAID's Women's Advocacy team is sponsoring and helping conduct a regional conference, helping local groups advocate for a national bill of women's rights.

Southern region: Grants to local advocacy groups are supporting a festival on the premises of a doctor's social club. This festival will include children's songs, the showing of a documentary film about Iraqi women's history, a gallery of children's paintings that will be displayed under the banner *No to Terror*, distribution of equal rights outreach and educational materials, showing musical plays and a gallery of pictorial presentations on women's rights, a poetry recitation, and a game show testing participants on women's history. The Ministry of Human Rights and College of Law at a local major university are contributing books and other materials in support of the effort.

Also, the Women's Advocacy team is reaching out to the broader area, distributing flowers and presents to hospitalized women and visiting a women's prison to distribute gifts and other care baskets.

Central region: A festival in Diyala, supported through a USAID rapid grant, will show four documentary films relating to an equal role of women in society, and a gallery of paintings.

South central region: USAID's civil society program conducting a regional conference on women's advocacy and outreach efforts. Future efforts will continue to assist participating Iraqi women's organizations.

been enrolled catch up with their peers and receive a primary education. Girls learn life skills and gain the academic background necessary to return to formal schooling.

Through building restorations, public outreach campaigns, and new, single-gender classrooms, USAID programs have worked to encourage girls from rural communities to return to school.

Training programs will reach 75,000 female teachers and school administrators by the end of the current (2005-06) school year. USAID is also rehabilitating the water and sanitation facilities at 800 primary schools throughout Iraq. The dilapidated co-ed restrooms had significantly contributed to the decrease in female enrollment.

HEALTH

USAID is helping to strengthen essential primary health care services throughout Iraq, expanding access to maternal care nationwide.

Since 2003, nearly 1 million pregnant women received vaccinations through USAID, UNICEF, and WHO efforts to restore crucial primary health care services countrywide. Working with local partners, USAID has trained 11,400 staff at over 2,000 community-based centers in almost every province to provide monthly rations of high protein biscuits and fortified milk to malnourished children and pregnant women.

Other programs have provided supplemen-

tary doses of vitamin A for more than 1.5 million nursing mothers and 600,000 children under two, and iron folate supplements for over 1.6 million women of childbearing age – helping to combat anemia, a major problem in Iraq and the greater Middle East.

AGRICULTURE

In the agricultural sector, USAID is training women and men in improved crop and livestock production technologies, market development, financial management, business planning and rural credit, and improved resource management.

Coordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad and local ministries in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, USAID partners are conducting agricultural production surveys for crops, livestock, and poultry. Training on essential survey, statistics, and data processing skills for ministry staff – nearly 20 percent of who are women – has greatly assisted national agricultural planning.

A countrywide program for agro-ecological zone mapping, essential for land planning, has depended heavily on women staff from

After suffering decades of oppression, Halabja is now listening to the first sounds of freedom. A grant from USAID's Community Action Program (CAP) purchased equipment and furniture to support the launch of the first independent radio station in Iraq—a station operated by women and devoted to women's programming.

the ministries of Agriculture, Transportation, Planning, and Water Resources.

Beekeeping and livestock programs have provided disadvantaged, rural women with the skills and equipment needed to participate in these low-cost high-value traditional industries.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions—whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments and, more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women.

The contributions that women make to the economic, social, and political lives of their nations, communities, and families make them key actors in effective development. Worldwide, more than 800 million women are economically active in agriculture, small and micro-enterprises, and, increasingly, in the export processing industries that drive globalization and regional economic growth.

Iraq Success Stories: Meet the Beneficiaries
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/success_stories_0206.html

Women in Development: Achieving Results
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/

UN: International Women's Day 2006
http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2006/

USAID: Our Commitment to Iraq
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/

SUCCESS STORY

USAID Initiative on Social Safety Net Reform Leverages Other Donor Assistance

As part of the USAID-Funded Economic Governance II Project to help in the economic recon-struction and policy reform in Iraq, technical assistance is be-ing provided to assist capacity building and institutional strengthening at the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). With USAID's guid-ance and support, the Govern-ment of Iraq (GOI) is implement-ing a Social Safety Net program to reduce poverty and help poor and vulnerable families through-out Iraq, representing nearly 25 percent of the country's popula-tion. The GOI is also receiving USAID assistance in developing pension policy, strategy and op-erations to enable a solid and financially sustainable public pension system to be put in place in Iraq.

At the latest meeting of the Iraqi Strategic Review Board (ISRB), approval was given to proceed with a World Bank Social Protection Project to allo-cate funds for further improvements to the country's Social Safety Net and pension reform programs. The project involves a $6 million World Bank grant that will help to accelerate the Social Safety Net program cur-rently underway. The funds will be used to build capacity within the MOLSA and the MOF and to improve efficiencies within administrative operations. More specifically, this will include expanding the use of the IT system responsible for registration of claimants, calculation of benefits, and creation of payment records.

Funds will also allow further assessments and financial analyses to take place on existing pension schemes, as well as new proposals that are being developed to bring further reforms to the pension system. These represent major issues that need to be addressed if the full economic, financial and social impact of current and alternative strategies are to be properly understood and managed.

At the IRSB meeting, the MOLSA Minister, Dr. Idris Hadi Salih, a leading figure in the Social Safety Net reform initiative, led a delegation consisting of members of his Social Welfare senior management team and USAID advisors. During his presentation to the ISRB, the Minister explained the importance of the World Bank project in building on the groundwork that has already been completed with assistance from USAID.

He explained: "The Social Safety Net is extremely important for the peo-ple of Iraq and is a key part of our poverty reduction strategy. It is the big-gest project that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has ever imple-mented. This new World Bank project brings us additional support and will help us to consolidate things and build on the progress that has been made so far."

The ISRB, by working in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Finance, plays a pivotal role in the economic reconstruction of Iraq. The ISRB is responsible for providing overall policy guidance on multilateral and bilateral financial and economic development assistance and allocates these funds to ensure they are channeled into areas of the highest priority.

April World Bank Appraisal Mission scheduled

The decision of the ISRB allows for the next round of discussions with the World Bank to take place. An intensive round of workshops, meetings, and presentations will be held in April and work will be done to finalize the specific components of the World Bank project and develop a project im-plementation plan. Sessions will cover project management, financial management, training/development, staffing, IT, procurement, controls and procedures. The outcome will be used as input into a technical as-sessment that World Bank officials will produce. USAID advisors will sup-port the appraisal mission as part of the technical assistance package being provided to the MOF and the MOLSA.

SUCCESS STORY

USAID launches Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Alliance at "Rebuild Iraq 2006"

USAID/Iraq launches its first Global Development Alliance (GDA) activity, aimed at strengthening the IT sector in Iraq.

The Iraq ICT Alliance is a public-private sector partnership working to promote information and communications technology development in Iraq.

The Alliance brings together multinational companies, international donor agencies, and Iraqi government, business, and educational organizations to encourage greater collaboration and cooperation to implement information systems and improve technical skills in Iraq.

IRAQ INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE

For more information: www.iraqictalliance.org

According to participants, one of the most successful events of the 2006 "Rebuild Iraq" Conference and Exhibition, held from May 8-11, was USAID's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Alliance Conference held at the Intercontinental Hotel on May 8. "Rebuild Iraq" saw some 1,000 companies from over 50 countries participate in the third annual event aimed at fostering business relationships and promoting economic development in Iraq.

Representatives from Cisco Systems, Computer Associates, Intel, Sun Microsystems, HP, Microsoft, Motorola, BearingPoint and Oracle engaged in serious discussions with Iraqi government officials and businesspeople, as well as several experts from USAID and the United Nations. For over 70 delegates, this event was the first time that officials from American and Iraqi IT companies came together for such a purpose to establish business linkages in addition to promoting development projects.

While Iraqi speakers at the ICT Alliance were candid about the daily challenges they face, this was neither the emphasis of the conference, nor the focus. Instead, they shared the many ways in which they have overcome the obstacles. The owner of a Baghdad-based IT firm for-matted his talk as "a day in my life", and with strong conviction and a good sense of humor, shared his daily struggles; which included power outages, unpredictable shipments and temperamental generators. Yet his emphasis was on what he manages to achieve, not what stands in his way.

A US corporate manager exclaimed that of all the "Rebuild Iraq" events over the past three years, the USAID ICT Alliance conference was the single best he attended. Asked why, he replied "this was a room full of professionals in the IT industry from all over the world", noting that the format fostered real dialogue and valuable sharing of information. The vice president of an Iraqi IT company in turn explained that an event like the ICT Alliance is "winning the peace one mind at a time".

As a direct result of the ICT Alliance conference, a pilot project to pro-mote development in the IT sector will be launched with cooperation from the partners. The Alliance website will also serve as a tool to promote this initiative and encourage collaboration among the members. In addition, planning has already started for the agreed-upon follow-up meeting, to take place in Iraq in a few months' time.

SUCCESS STORY

USAID Launches the Iraq Information Communication Technology Alliance (ICT)

On May 8, the USAID launched the Iraq Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Alliance during the Rebuild Iraq Conference and exhibition in Amman, Jordan. The launch was announced by Dawn Liberi, USAID's mission director in Iraq.

The Iraq ICT Alliance is a public-private partnership working to promote information and communications technology development in Iraq. The Alliance brings together multinational companies, international donor agencies, and Iraqi government, business, and educational organizations to encourage greater collaboration and cooperation to implement information systems and improve technical skills in Iraq.

Representatives from BearingPoint, Cisco Systems, Computer Associates, Intel, HP, Microsoft, Motorola, and Oracle attended the meeting in Amman along with over 20 Iraqi government officials and business-people, and several experts from the U.S. government and the United Nations.

This Alliance encourages the formation of new and the expansion of existing development projects in the ICT sector with a particular focus on training programs targeting Iraqi women and youth. Some of the activities proposed at the launch include: improved curriculum in universities for computer programmers; low-cost Internet access for schools and community centers; software and training for a government procurement system; and an online employment database in Arabic.

"The projects being implemented by the Iraq ICT Alliance will help improve schools, create jobs, and enhance productivity, and we thank our corporate partners and other donors for working with USAID on this important initiative," stated Liberi.

The Iraq ICT Alliance is the first Office of Global Development Alliances (GDA) activity to be implemented by the USAID mission in Iraq. USAID's Global Development Alliance approach mobilizes the ideas, expertise, and resources of governments, businesses and civil society by forging public-private alliances. Since 2001, USAID has provided more than $1.1 billion for nearly 300 public-private alliances and leveraged over $3.7 billion in partner contributions. Through these alliances, USAID has not only gained additional financial resources for development activities, but also new technologies, intellectual capital, and technical and managerial expertise that enhance its ability to address an increasingly complex set of development challenges.

For additional information on the USAID/Iraq ICT Alliance, please visit: www.iraqictalliance.org.

THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

The Global Development Alliance (GDA) is USAID's commitment to change the way we implement our assistance mandate. GDA mobilizes the ideas, efforts and resources of governments, businesses and civil society by forging public-private alliances to stimulate economic growth, develop businesses and workforces, address health and environmental issues, and expand access to education and technology.

In the 1970s, 70 percent of resource flows from the United States to the developing world were from official development assistance and 30 percent were private. Today, 85 percent of resource flows from the United States to the developing world are private and 15 percent are public. These changes in flows reflect the emergence of the private for-profit sector and the non-governmental sector as significant participants in the development process. The Global Development Alliance approach responds to this changed environment, and it extends USAID's reach and effectiveness in meeting development objectives by combining its strengths with the resources and capabilities of other prominent actors.

SUCCESS STORY

USAID's Marshlands Monitoring Program Advances

Monitoring results show that excellent progress is being made in the restoration of biodiversity in the marshlands.

A marsh monitor collects water samples to test water quality in the marshlands

Agriculture is Iraq's largest employer, the second largest value sector, and an effective engine for promoting stability through private sector development, poverty reduction, and food security. The revival of a dynamic, market-driven agricultural sector will strengthen private business, increase income and employment opportunities, and meet the food requirements of the Iraqi people. Since 2003, USAID's agriculture program has restored veterinary clinics, introduced improved cereal grain varieties, repaired agricultural equipment, and trained farmers and ministry staff.

The Iraqi marshlands, once one of the world's largest wetland ecosystems, are undergoing restoration to remedy the damage done between 1991 and 2003 when they were drained and significantly reduced from their original size. Re-flooding efforts after 2003 have restored the marshlands to one-third of their original size, and they are once again becoming rich in aquatic productivity, particularly fish and birds. Due to their unique ecosystem and isolation from other comparable systems, the marshlands play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity in the Middle East. Additionally, due to the increase in economic activities related to the restoration of the marshlands, many refugees and internally displaced persons have returned to the area.

In support of the marshlands restoration, USAID's Agriculture Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI) is maintaining monitoring teams to assess the success of restoration efforts and to collect data that will guide the Government of Iraq's policies and decisions regarding the marshlands. Six monitoring stations have been established in the Huwayzah, Suq Al Shuyuak, and East Hammar marshes, and monitoring teams conduct regular visits to collect data

Monitoring results show that excellent progress is being made in the restoration of biodiversity in the marshlands. Recently, the monitoring teams noted the return of three important species of fish to the marshlands. These fish are marketable throughout southern Iraq and have the potential to become a source of income for marsh dwellers.

The monitoring teams also observed the return of migratory ducks and geese over the winter, a sign that the marshlands are again becoming hospitable as a wintering site for migratory water birds. In addition to the monitoring program, ARDI is implementing crop and livestock production programs to improve agricultural production in the marshlands. Many marsh dwellers turned to agriculture after the desiccation of the marshes, which dried up land that was previously covered with water. There were very few, if any government agricultural extension services in the marshlands, so many farmers do not have knowledge of proper cultivation techniques.

The ARDI production programs are working directly with farmers to introduce modern techniques and improve production of sorghum, okra, maize, alfalfa and sunflower, crops that are in high demand in the marshlands area. The farmers can expect to increase their income through the sale of these crops, as well as improve their own food security. To improve livestock production in the marshlands, ARDI is working with buffalo breeders to improve nutrition in their herds, in order to improve reproductive efficiency and increase productivity and breeders' incomes. ARDI is also assisting in the establishment of 10 private veterinary clinics in Basrah, which will be owned and operated by previously unemployed veterinarians and will serve marshland livestock breeders to help them ensure the health and productivity of their animals.

SUCCESS STORY
The Iraqi Association of Securities Dealers (IASD)

A USAID grant helps IASD move into its new building, a step that will help expand training and advocacy efforts.

![IASD logo]

The IASD represents the professional broker-dealer community in Iraq and plays a critical role in advocating for rules, regulations, and policies affecting the country's capital markets.

"The capital market is the soul and mirror of the economy in advanced countries," observed an IASD representative. "The Iraqi Stock Exchange is building upon the experience of other capital markets around the world by taking advantage of USAID experts and their experience in capital markets."

With the establishment of IASD to support the country-wide adoption of international best practices, Iraq will be better placed to encourage a fair and prosperous securities industry.

With support from a USAID grant, the Iraqi Association of Securities Dealers (IASD) recently moved into new headquarters, a modern facility with the equipment and space needed for the IASD to support its members and help develop the Iraqi capital market. Founded in 2004, the Baghdad-based IASD represents the 51 brokerage firms that are licensed to trade on the Iraq Stock Exchange (ISX).

"[A] few years back, IASD was just a gathering of brokers," Walid, IASD's executive manager, reflected. "They shared the same interests of developing their market to become competitive with other markets in the region, they set down and put forth many goals and objectives and dreamed that one day there would be an association that would voice their concerns, upgrade their skills, and build a platform for a viable future. Thanks to USAID this dream is a reality today."

The grant from USAID helped IASD refurbish a facility that includes a functional training center furnished with new equipment and modern computers. Drawing on earlier USAID support, IASD has hired and trained staff to manage association activities and advocate for members. "The achievements," Walid noted, "were beyond expectations."

Over 200 people attended the opening ceremony for the IASD building on May 18, including representatives from 51 brokerage firms, ISX, and listed companies. Two days later—on May 20— IASD launched its first training program on Capital Market Development. Over 50 members of the Securities Broker community have joined the program to improve their computer skills. The one-month program included hands-on training in software applications given by highly qualified instructors in cooperation with experts from USAID's private sector development program.

The training program is part of IASD's effort to prepare Iraqi brokerage companies for upcoming automated trading on the ISX. "This is the best training program I have attended" said one attendant. "We are truly grateful to the people who are contributing a great deal to see a real development in Iraq's capital markets".

Over 50 Iraqi brokers are currently receiving training and technical support at the new IASD headquarters.

Improving Grain Production in Iraq

The Agriculture Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI)

Agriculture is Iraq's second largest value sector, the country's largest employer, and an effective engine for promoting stability through private sector development, poverty reduction, and food security. The revival of a dynamic, market-driven agricultural sector will strengthen private business, increase income and employment opportunities, and meet the food requirements of the Iraqi people.

Despite Iraq's strong agricultural heritage, after decades of neglect the country can no longer provide enough wheat – a fundamental staple crop – to satisfy the domestic market. Iraqis currently consume nearly 4 million tons of wheat annually, yet only produce 500,000 tons of milling-quality wheat. More than 85 percent of wheat consumed in Iraq is imported, making it the most costly component of Iraq's $3 billion Public Distribution System food basket. Although Iraq has the capacity to produce over 2 tons of wheat per hectare the current average is a paltry 800 kilograms per hectare.

NATIONAL WHEAT PROGRAM & PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH

USAID and the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) are taking essential steps to increase the domestic production and quality of wheat. Quick-impact programs have delivered thousands of tons of certified wheat seed to Iraqi farmers, stimulating increased production; market reforms have benefited Iraqi farmers and encouraged private sector investment. New varieties of wheat are being introduced, higher caliber seed is being planted, and new cultivation methods are being demonstrated. Already, efforts on select Iraqi farms have doubled wheat production, from 0.8 metric tons per hectare (MT/ha) to between 1.5 and 2.0 MT/ha.

In addition to grain improvement efforts, USAID's National Wheat Program is developing a system of pesticide management, training farmers in the use of fertilizer, and restoring dilapidated tractors. Future projects will further enhance production meth-

An Iraqi farmer in Dohuk inspects a USAID-supported wheat demonstration field. In coordination with the MOA, USAID has established five seed multiplication plots in Dohuk and, countrywide, over 40 wheat demonstration plots like the one above.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

High Value Crops

- **Improved Date Palm Output:** Established date palm nurseries in 13 governorates that will expand palm tree population by 410,000 new trees a year.

- **Increased Olive Tree Population:** Planted 9,000 olive trees in 16 demonstration plots countrywide.

- **Provided Farm Machinery Training & Tools:** Trained 107 mechanics in farm machinery repair and supplied tools to help establish private repair businesses.

- **Rehabilitated Veterinary Clinics:** Rehabilitated 64 veterinary clinics, serving 127,000 animal breeders.

Crop Production

- **Seed Improvement:** Distributed 169 wheat seed cleaners to nine NGOs in 18 governorates. Produced over 31,500 metric tons of grade 1, treated wheat seed for 2006-07 season.

- **Increased Training:** 175 operators trained in wheat seed cleaning and treatment.

- **Farm Machinery Repair:** To date, a total of 2,629 tractors have been repaired throughout Iraq.

Soil & Water Management

- **Strategy Development:** Initiated a 10-ministry effort to develop the Iraq water and land use strategy.

- **Grant Provision - Irrigation:** Provided small-scale grants for canal and water infrastructure improvements on 320,000 acres of land serving 445,000 Iraqis.

ods and increase the number of farmers participating in these programs, efforts that will help build capacity and contribute to sustainable growth.

QUICK-IMPACT EFFORTS

ARDI imported and delivered 4,000 metric tons of high quality, certified Cham-6 wheat seed to MOA, jumpstarting grain production during Iraq's 2004-05 growing season. This wheat seed was then distributed directly to farmers; a second, smaller amount of seed was used to establish the 44 USAID-sponsored wheat demonstration sites in four governorates and to plant 200 hectares for a trial USAID seed multiplication program in northern Iraq. This new seed provided the national seed stock with increased variety and higher quality of wheat. Farmers using the newer seeds will be able to increase wheat yields over the next few harvests.

The higher grade seed also produces a higher quality produce for bread, thus allowing a higher selling price. Cham-6 is a low-protein wheat ideal for bread making. The wheat seed, often used in USAID's programs, has proven successful in Iraq.

Developing Market Incentives

Building on the successful distribution of 4,000 metric tons of wheat seed, the MOA has also taken steps to reform wheat sector pricing and encourage investment. In late 2004, drawing on USAID support, the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade agreed to set the price of Grade 1 wheat at $200/ton for the 2005 crop cycle, a 10 percent increase over 2003-04 and double the price of two years ago. As of June 2006, the price of Grade 1 wheat has reached $300/ton. After many years of poor prices, these price increases should provide sufficient incentive for farmers to invest in expanded production and new technologies.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Supporting Seed Multiplication

Iraqi crop yields are very low by international standards. The major objective of USAID and the MOA's crop production program is to introduce new technologies or techniques to improve yields. For wheat production, a significant increase in yields can be achieved simply by improving seed quality. Seed multiplication and certification programs of the past broke down over the last three decades, and farmers have had to rely on low quality farm-saved wheat seed. USAID's seed multiplication

project seeks to produce high quality seed for planting in subsequent years.

In late 2005, ARDI and MOA distributed 440 tons of certified wheat seed to 124 selected farmers in Erbil and Dohuk to be multiplied for the next planting season. In addition to seed, farmers are receiving technical assistance, training, and seed cleaning services after the harvest. The fall training session – reaching nearly 90 Iraqi farmers – covered techniques for producing certified seed, including land preparation, fertilizer application, integrated pest management. ARDI and the MOA will give another training session before the 2006 summer harvest. During the growing season, ARDI and MOA monitors will be inspecting fields to ensure that pest and weed control techniques are being properly implemented, and to check for the appearance of any non-desirable varieties.

Planting 130 kg of seed per hectare, farmers can produce up to 1,500 kg of seed per hectare if the crop is properly cared for and conditions are good, especially if there is sufficient rain. Under these circumstances, the project will produce up to 5,100 tons of seed for the next planting season, enough for close to 40,000 hectares. After this year's harvest ARDI will collect, clean, and bag the seed. The project will keep two tons for every ton distributed and return the balance to the farmers for their own use. The 880 tons of seed that the project retains will be distributed to farmers next year for another multiplication.

Testing Salt-Tolerant Seed
USAID is also working with the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) on the multiplication of salt-tolerant wheat seed, an effort that will increase agricultural productivity on land with highly saline soil. Many areas of central and southern Iraq suffer from high soil salinity caused by years of improper irrigation and poor drainage. Large areas of land have low agricultural productivity due to the high salinity, and some land has been taken out of production altogether. The poor soil quality in this part of Iraq has contributed significantly to low standards of living among local farmers.

In order to increase the availability of salt-tolerant wheat seed in Iraq, USAID and MOST are multiplying the 14 tons of seed of Furat and Dijla wheat varieties, which should produce at least 120 tons of seed for the next wheat season. The 14 tons of seed were planted in December 2005 to 100 hec-

An Iraqi agricultural engineer inspects a field of salt-tolerant wheat in Muthanna governorate, southern Iraq.

tares of highly-saline land belonging to several cooperating farmers in Muthanna, Qadissiya, Baghdad, and Babylon governorates. USAID and MOST staff are monitoring the fields and providing technical assistance to the farmers to ensure the success of the crop. Recent monitoring visits indicate that the crop is growing well.

EXPANDED SEED TECHNOLOGY

To support the National Wheat Program and encourage private sector development, USAID is working to restore seed processing facilities in Iraq. Good seed is the single most significant factor in improving wheat quality and yields. Fertilizer, pesticides, and good practices will not help farmers if the seed planted is of poor quality. Seed processing facilities in Iraq have suffered from neglect and the effects of hostilities in recent years, severely reducing the capacity to clean and treat seed.

USAID is providing the equipment and training necessary for improving the quality and quantity of wheat seed in Iraq. These programs also promote the establishment of new farming co-ops and identify local equipment dealers who may be interested in importing and selling this type of equipment. These are the first steps in establishing private sector seed cleaning in Iraq.

Seed Processing
It is necessary for farmers to clean and treat the seed they save each year in order to produce better quality wheat with higher yields. Most farmers however, do not have ready access to seed cleaning equipment, and the great majority of wheat

farmers in Iraq continue to use their own seed over and over again. At present between 8 and 20 percent of farmer-saved seed planted in Iraq is composed of weeds, lentils, weak grain, and other types of foreign material, thus producing smaller and poorer quality yields.

In the summer of 2005, USAID procured and distributed 169 seed cleaners to farming cooperatives and five NGOs across all 18 governorates. The number of cleaners distributed depended on each governorate's relative share of the country's total area planted to wheat. Seed cleaners provide a quick, mobile, and relatively inexpensive way to improve wheat yields by separating out debris and applying essential fungicide to the seeds. In addition, ARDI trained 198 operators, mechanics, and supervisors to use the seed cleaners.

Between September and December 2005, these cleaners produced over 31,500 metric tons of Grade 1 wheat seed. If sold as seed – at the current market rate of $300 per metric ton of Grade 1 seed – it has a total value of nearly $9.5 million. Planted, the cleaned seed will improve yields between 20 and 25 percent. In addition, USAID specialists estimate that 60 percent of the wheat crop from the cleaned and treated seed will make bread-grade wheat. Only 20 percent of uncleaned and untreated seed can be used for bread-grade wheat.

Private Sector Development
By working in coordination with farmer cooperative groups, local NGOs, and the private sector, USAID programs help to strengthen private institutions and encourage investment in the agricultural sector. By operating the seed cleaners, these organizations will build their reputations as providers of valuable

agricultural services. Indeed, two local NGOs are offering free supplies of the fungicide Raxil as an additional service to farmers. Farmer cooperative groups, profiting from the equipment, will be able to offer Iraqi farmers further support and opportunities to invest in other agricultural machinery.

By providing this seed processing and grain cleaning equipment, USAID programs are delivering a highly efficient, cost effective way of supporting Iraqi farmers. Through the seed processing equipment alone, Iraqi farmers throughout the country will be able to secure a 20-25 percent increase in wheat grain yield, and an overall harvest of higher quality grain than usually produced. Additional grain cleaning services will help farmers sell their crops for the highest market value while continuing to improve their seed material.

DEMONSTRATING SUCCESS

The USAID Wheat Production Technology Demonstrations are designed to accelerate the modernization of the Iraqi wheat industry. The demonstrations incorporate several critical components which will improve wheat yield and harvested wheat quality. These include increased production seed through multiplication; redistribution of improved seed to farmers; better land preparation; proper fertilizer and herbicide application; improved equipment for harvesting and transportation; and better storage. The seeds used in the USAID method are certified and treated with a fungicide to increase germination rates and to prevent disease. In coordination with the MOA, USAID has established 44 wheat demonstration plots in the Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaymaniah governorates and five seed multiplication plots in the Dohuk governorate.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Since 2003, USAID's agriculture program has restored veterinary clinics, introduced improved cereal grain varieties, repaired agricultural equipment, and trained farmers and ministry staff.

USAID/Iraq: Agriculture
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/agri.html

USAID/Iraq: Restoring Agricultural Equipment
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/updates/mar06/iraq_fs21_032406.pdf

Agriculture Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI)

High Value Crops

Improved Date Palm Output: Established date palm nurseries in 13 governorates that will expand Iraqi palm tree population by 410,000 new trees per year.

Provided Farm Machinery Training & Tools: Trained 28 mechanics in farm machinery repair and supplied tools to help establish private repair businesses.

Increased Olive Tree Population: 9,000 olive trees have been planted in 16 demonstration plots countrywide.

Rehabilitated Veterinary Clinics: 55 veterinary clinics have been rehabilitated, serving more than 108,000 animal breeders.

Crop Production

Seed Improvement: Distributed 169 wheat seed cleaners to nine NGOs in 18 governorates. Produced over 29,000 metric tons of grade 1, treated wheat seed for 2005-06 season, which will plant 225,000 hectares of land.

Increased Training: 175 operators trained in wheat seed cleaning and treating.

Farm Machinery Repair: To date, a total of 1,543 tractors have been repaired of a planned 5,000 nation wide.

Soil & Water Management

Strategy Development: Initiated a 10-ministry effort to develop the Iraq water and land use strategy.

Grant Provision - Irrigation: Provided small-scale grants that increased canal and water infrastructure improvements on 320,000 acres of land serving 445,000 Iraqis.

employed there – will continue to provide repair and maintenance services beyond the life of the project.

USAID partners are also training additional Iraqi mechanics to set up independent repair workshops in rural areas where services for agricultural machinery were not previously available. Nearly 30 Iraqis were trained and received essential tools in a recent program; USAID plans to train and equip up to 150 more rural mechanics over the coming months.

Nine Iraqi mechanics recently attended an advanced training course at the CNH facility in Turkey. After the five-day course in tractor maintenance and repair, the mechanics returned to their independent workshops to train other mechanics.

A separate advanced training activity is underway in cooperation with the CNH distributor in Turkey. Already, 16 mechanics have completed the course and additional trainings for up to 20 mechanics will be held over the next few months. During the five-day workshop, Iraqis from independent workshops tour production plants and attend training on engine disassembly and assembly, dynamometer testing, hydraulic systems, transmission, and Power Take Off systems. The participating Iraqi mechanics serve in supervisory positions and will be able to train at least ten additional mechanics in these skills on their return to Iraq, multiplying the benefit of the training course and increasing the quality of repair services available in Iraq.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture is Iraq's second largest value sector, the country's largest employer, and an effective engine for promoting stability through private sector development, poverty reduction, and food security. The revival of a dynamic, market-driven agricultural sector will strengthen private business, increase employment opportunities, and meet the food requirements of the Iraqi people.

USAID's Agriculture Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI) provides technical assistance and support to jump start Iraq's agriculture sector. Restoring essential equipment, including tractors and irrigation systems, is part of the larger effort to restore agricultural production and develop the private sector. Other efforts, outlined elsewhere, include training farmers and ministry officials in modern agricultural methods, the use of new equipment, and land and water management. Already, demonstrations of a cost-effective technical package on test plots have shown a 40 percent average increase in wheat yield.

A tractor owner receives his repaired tractor. For the first time in years, it is ready for use in agricultural production. USAID's tractor repair program will restore at least 5,000 inoperable tractors by September 2006.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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USAID: Support to Agricultural Development in Iraq
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/agri.html

Iraq Success Stories: Meet the Beneficiaries
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/
success_stories_0206.html

USAID: Our Commitment to Iraq
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/