

Focused Stabilization in Strategic Cities Initiative (FSSCI)

The Focused Stabilization in Strategic Cities Initiative (FSSCI) is a key element in the United States Mission to Iraq's strategy to help defeat the insurgency. The objective of the project is to provide the vital link between Military post strike stabilization projects, funded under Commander Emergency Response Project (CERP) and longer-term development initiatives. USAID will implement the project which is scheduled to begin in June 2006. The project will be operational for up to three years, depending upon the decision of the Embassy, Multi National Force-I (MNF-I), and USAID to proceed with the project. FSSCI does not have long-term development objectives. It is designed to work in areas that are not ready for long-term development due to security. It will help establish economic and social stability in communities in up to 10 cities that have been impacted by significant insurgent activity and build the conditions in which long-term development can occur. Developing joint strategies and action plans with MNF-I, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) or their equivalents, and local and the National Government will be critical to success. FSSCI will accelerate the development of effective local government and development through the PRT mechanism by addressing the serious destabilizing impact of prolonged insurgent activities.

Iraq's strategic cities have a combined population of approximately 12.3 million and comprise about half of the population of Iraq. Given available funding at the time of implementation, MNF-I and USAID will determine the exact location of FSSCI project. It could be entire cities, or it could be key neighborhoods and districts that have been identified as needing FSSCI resources. The project can be expanded or contracted as needed, given need and funding. If the security situation improves in a certain area resources can be moved to other areas. FSSCI is designed to be flexible and to respond rapidly to field conditions.

FSSCI will undertake medium-term projects that will revitalize communities through community rehabilitation, generating employment and providing skills development for sustainable employment and business development. Key results over the three year project include:

- Establishing wide-spread support for democratic process.
- Improving economic and social stability.
- Decreasing tension among religious and ethnic groups.

Principal activities include:

- Rehabilitating essential community infrastructure and providing essential and basic services.
- Stimulate economic growth through employment generation, skills development and business development.
- Provide specialized youth projects to deal with non-economic issues confronting young people.
- Mitigate conflict between religious and ethnic groups.

A key component of the FSSCI will be the creation of structured employment and learning projects, fashioned after the Civilian Conservation Corp concept of the Depression era, and the Job Corps concept of the 1960-70s. Through this mechanism, thousand of unemployed and underemployed young people will be provided incomes, job skills, educational opportunities, and life skills. FSSCI will integrate youth of differing ethnic and religious background, fostering tolerance and managing conflict between different ethnic and religious groups.

In addition thousand of small businesses will be created or helped to expand further stabilizing areas and providing sustainable employment. Communities will also be helped in addressing conflict, religious, ethnic and internecine conflict are serious issues in Iraq. Projects focus directly at addressing the issues through NGOs and community leaders will be supported.