

IRAQ LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM II (LGP II)

Implementer: Research Triangle Institute (RTI)

Since April 2003, USAID has supported the establishment of local government structures and increased their capacity to deliver basic services. Under its Local Governance Program I, USAID helped to establish 16 of Iraq's 18 provincial councils, as well as 96 district councils, 195 city/sub-district councils, and 437 neighborhood councils. It has trained and mentored more than 2,000 local council members, 15 governors, 42 deputy governors, and 420 department heads and staff on local government administration and service delivery. Basic services for small community projects such as water, sewage, electricity and solid-waste management were improved throughout Iraq. USAID has also worked to develop civil society groups and the media to encourage the active participation of Iraqi citizens at all levels of Iraq's emerging democracy.

Under the auspices of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), USAID's Local Governance Program II (LGPII) will continue to strengthen Iraq's provincial governments ability to develop transparent and sustained capability to govern, promote increased security and rule of law, promote political and economic development and provide provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the population. LGP II builds on previous successes, focusing on institutionalizing local government systems through assistance to improve core public administration functions. More competent local government will contribute to the country's overall stability and local delivery of essential services.

As part of the National Coordination Team (NCT), LGP II provides dedicated support to the PRTs including the synchronization of governance, reconstruction, and economic development assistance, and to provide coordination of provincial efforts of the U.S. Mission, Coalition Partners, Donors, and the Iraqi Government. In this regard, LGP will actively support the PRT in:

- enhancing advocacy efforts of the national and local governments in promoting policy reform through passage of enabling legislation such as a Local Government Code;
- assisting in clarifying and defining the various functions and responsibilities that could be devolved from the national to local government levels in a decentralized mode of governance;
- strengthening the capabilities of the different provinces and local governments across Iraq in delivering services to the population with increased security and rule of law, stable political and economic development, and transparent and accountable government;
- promoting active participation of the citizens, civil society organizations, private sector and other groups in the decision-making processes and governmental affairs; and
- developing the capabilities of Regional Institutes of Public Administration to capture and sustain the learning and gains of the program regarding local governance training, undertake policy studies and provide policy advice, conduct training and mentoring to national and local officials in coordination with the National Capacity Development (NCD) Program, and offer degree programs on public administration to build a cadre of

highly trained and educated potential political and civil service officials and staff.

Beneficiaries of the assistance will include Provincial Council, Committees and staff, Provincial Departments, Qadas (Districts), Nahiyahs (Sub Districts), Neighborhood and City Councils, Directors General and staff involved in Local Government Matters, NGOs, CSOs, and the National Assembly (Local Government Caucus).

Over the next two years, USAID will set up LPG II operations at PRT sites in 14 provinces and two Regional Reconstruction Teams (RRT) comprising three Kurdish provinces. To ensure the overall success of the USG's decentralization efforts in Iraq, LGP II Program staff will consist of 119 expatriate technicians and 1,200 professional Iraqi full time staff. Each PRT will have three full-time expatriate (local governance/council expert; public finance/audit expert, and municipal engineer/urban planner) and up to 25 Iraqi staff. The remaining 77 expatriate and 850 Iraqi staff will work at the RRTs to provide surge capacity as well as technical expertise for all locations in their province.

The program will focus on improving the capacity of provincial and local councils, committees and line departments to manage and deliver effective and efficient services through competency-based training, mentoring and technical assistance. While the roles and responsibilities of local governments have not yet been clarified, it is certain that local government officials and council members will play critical roles in improving service delivery and being open and accountable to citizens. The program will also work with the Iraqi government to increase the level and quality of participation by the citizenry in the governmental decision-making process. Various channels for participation that are accepted and used on a regular basis shall be fostered. A key element of the program will be participatory mechanisms to support expanded, strengthened, and sustained citizen participation in governmental decision-making and resource allocation process. The desired end-state is for government to respond to citizens' needs and citizen to hold their government accountable.

In the first 90 days of the PRT Initiative; LGPII will collect governance and service delivery baseline data; provide training and technical assistance to current PCs, local councils, and line departments. After the first 90 days of fielding staff and collections baseline data, basic level training (6 modules) will be provided to newly elected council members; mentoring and TA to PCs, local councils, and line departments; "Learning by Doing" programs will be implemented using incentive grants; and work will begin to establish 2 of 4 regional Institutes of Public Administration where local government will be trained and certified in core competencies. These Institutes will help to ensure that a sustainable system is in place to train future leaders.