



## Upgrading Iraqi Canal System



Photo: USAID/Iraq

The Sweet Water Canal, which had not been maintained since 1999, will be restored by USAID to the full capacity of 32,000 cubic meters per hour - providing fresh water to 1.75 million citizens of the Basrah region.

The Sweet Water Canal, constructed in 1996, pumps water to twenty-three plants around Basrah City which treat and distribute water into the city. Not been maintained since 1999, by 2004 the canal was operating at less than half its capacity - more than 80% of treated water was unfit to drink.

Some of the canal's water treatment stations date back to 1932 and its upkeep was minimal. The canal and its reservoirs were filled in places with up to two meters of sediment, and vegetation was growing on the surface. A lack of dredging reduced the effectiveness of the reservoirs, and the high solids content of the water increased wear on the pumps.

At a cost of almost \$38 million, the entire system is being rehabilitated by USAID including the 240-kilometer canal, its two pump stations, two reservoirs, and fourteen water treatment stations. Work has included dredging and cleaning the canal and reservoirs, refurbishing pump stations, providing backup power sources, repairing canal embankments, and replacing worn and broken parts.

By mid-spring 2004, residents of Al Basrah will begin to see substantial improvements in their water supply, and by summer 2004, the quality and volume of fully treated water will surpass the pre-war levels. USAID is supporting the Coalition Provisional Authority's goal to return essential services to Iraq by providing over \$197 million in water and sanitation projects that will benefit over 14.5 million Iraqis.

Photo & Caption

