



Upgrading Iraq Canal System to Modern Times

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

At a cost of almost \$38 million, the entire system is being rehabilitated by USAID in support of the Coalition Provisional Authority's goal to return essential services to Iraq. The 240-kilometer canal, its two pump stations, two reservoirs, and fourteen water treatment stations are all being repaired and rehabilitated. 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.



Photo: USAID/Iraq

Before

Some of the canal's water treatment stations date to 1932 and 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.

After

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 conditions.



Photo: USAID/Iraq

Before & After