



USAID
من الشعب الأمريكي

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

برنامج دعم وتطوير البرلمان بروگرامي بيشنگيري اوبه ره بيدان به رله مان

USAID LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

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USAID/Iraq Strategic Objective 10: Capacity of National Government Institutions Improved

ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR I

OCTOBER 2008 – SEPTEMBER 2009

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Parliamentarians from all governorates of Iraq convening at the Baghdad Convention Center, where the Council of Representatives meets.

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ACRONYM LIST

BRD	Budget Research Department
CMI	Change Management Initiative
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Council of Representatives
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DG	Director General
FY	Fiscal Year
GOI	Government of Iraq
IAS	International Accounting Standards
ICPD	Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development (Previously called the Parliamentary Institute and Parliamentary Development Center)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPEP	Iraqi Professors Educating Parliament
IT	Information Technology
LSP	Legislative Strengthening Program
LTTA	Long-Term Technical Advisor
MAPDC	Members Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMP	Performance Management Plan
POD	Provincial Offices Department
REDI	Regional Democracy Initiative IQC
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short-Term Technical Advisor
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government



INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by AECOM, is promoting a new era of political stability in Iraq. LSP provides a range of support to strengthen Iraq's parliament, the Council of Representatives (COR). LSP is guiding the COR along a more sustainable democratic path, promoting greater transparency and accountability.

The team of international and local specialists are building the capacity of the members and staff of parliament to debate laws in a formal constructive environment, form and run parliamentary committees, analyze and properly consider proposed legislation, improve the functioning of the Presidency Council, improve the ability of parliament to oversee the executive branch, review and analyze the national budget, and bring the national government closer to constituents in the provinces.

The Program concludes its first year with a growing list of programmatic successes and has established strong relationships in the Council. This productive, positive collaboration points toward continued success and increased results as we begin the second year of program implementation.

In Year 2 LSP will increase the level of effort and resources available to build the capacity of the COR and to facilitate a smooth transition during the critical transfer from the first to the second parliament, following general elections to be held in the beginning of 2010.



CONTRACT AT A GLANCE

USAID LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

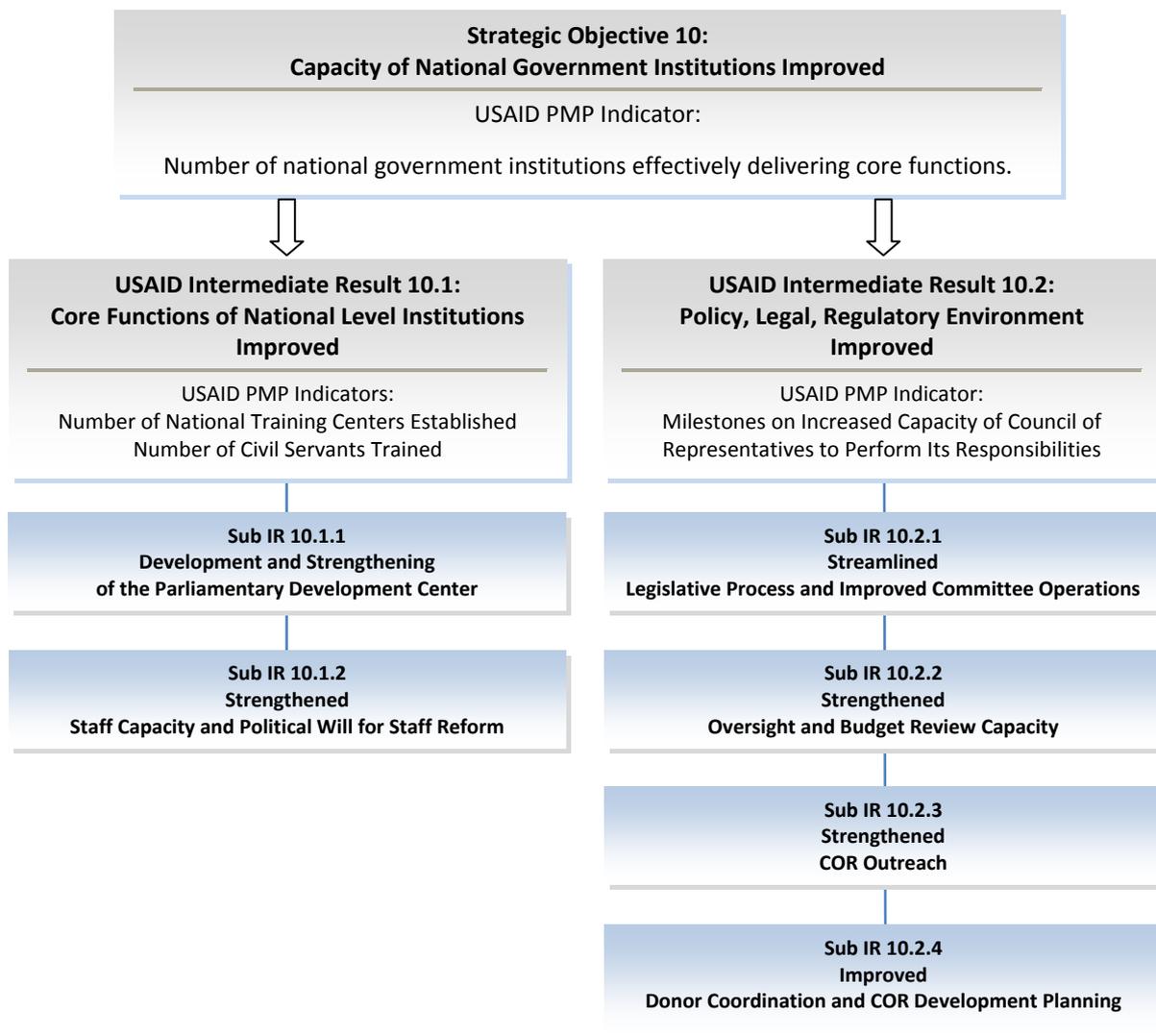
A Task Order of the USAID Regional Democracy Initiative (REDI) – Governance IQC

Contract Number:	263-I-03-06-00015-00 (REDI Task Order No. 3)
Start Date:	October 1, 2008
Ceiling Amount:	\$35,000,000
Obligated Amount:	\$31,200,000
End Date:	March 31, 2011
Option Period:	April 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012 (if exercised)
USAID Programmatic Alignment:	USAID/Iraq Strategic Objective 10: Improve the Capacity of the National Government USAID/Iraq Intermediate Result 10.1: Core Functions of National Level Institutions Improved USAID/Iraq Intermediate Result 10.2: Policy, Legal, Regulatory Environment Improved
Prime Contractor to USAID:	AECOM
Major Subcontractors to AECOM:	Management Systems International SallyPort Global Services



LSP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

USAID/Iraq's results framework seeks to address the development challenge through a series of project-level results and outcomes. Support for democratic governance in a highly fluid, post-transition political environment involves a number of risks; the results framework seeks to identify the critical assumptions made in the program design as well as the causal linkages between the project components and expected results.



FOREWORD

Iraq's Council of Representatives remains a relatively new institution, approaching a crucial phase in its development. In December 2008, when USAID's Legislative Strengthening Program was launched, Iraq had reached a period of relative calm and stability, creating an environment with the potential to develop compromise across political divides.

During its first year, USAID/LSP, has made successive improvements in meeting the goals set by the COR leadership for more responsive and democratic parliament. USAID/LSP has developed strong relationships with the parliamentary leadership, committees, and the various directorates. The USAID/LSP-supported Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development will provide training and research to provide sustained ongoing institutional development of the COR. As the Center grows, its mission will reflect the vision laid out by the COR Presidency Council.



USAID/LSP has increased the capacity of the COR to conduct budget analysis and oversight and has been instrumental in significantly increasing the distribution of the budget within the COR. Further, my colleagues at the COR administration and I are working closely with USAID/LSP to review the administrative structure of the parliament and develop a plan for human resources reform.

Democratic elections provide the impetus for positive reforms. A smooth transition between the first and second post-Constitution parliaments is vital in retaining the progress made thus far, and USAID/LSP can play a vital role by continuing to facilitate the development of a democratic and mission-driven Iraqi Parliament.

Amjad Abdul Hameed Abdul Majeed

*Secretary General
Iraq Council of Representatives*

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

A YEAR OF PROGRESS IN THE IRAQI COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP) has developed a broad constituency of support in Iraq's parliament, the Council of Representatives (COR). The LSP team of international and Iraqi experts has established strong relationships with the Speaker, members of the Presidency Council, the Secretary General of the COR's Secretariat of Directorates and Advisers, staff, MPs, and numerous committees, and political blocs. There is growing awareness of the Program in the COR, and LSP staff have earned the trust and confidence of many counterparts.

ACHIEVEMENTS GROUPED BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Objective

1

Development and Strengthening of the Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD)

LSP is assisting the COR to establish the Center and achieve its mission to enhance parliamentary capacity, provide services to parliament in areas of research and analysis on a non-partisan, credible, accurate, timely basis as needed.

The Center will:

- Train and orient members of parliament and staff;
- Organize seminars and host conferences;
- Promote exchange programs and studies;
- Liaise with regional and international experts; and
- Publish studies, analytical reports, newsletters and annual reports.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP refined the conceptual design of the ICPD, reviewing governance options and organizational structures and assisted in identifying an interim Director.

LSP assisted the Members' Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee (MAPDC) in designing and approving a plan for the staffing structure of the ICPD.

LSP helped prepare detailed job descriptions for the ICPD Chairman, the governing board, and other staff positions in the various divisions.

The Presidency Council identified the former National Council building as the new location for the ICPD.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Iraq Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD)

Based on the request of the COR Speaker and Presidency Council, the Secretariat drafted a decree to establish the Iraq Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD). LSP advisors assisted with the design of the governance and organizational structures and are helping to design, furnish and equip the physical home for the ICPD in the former National Council building.



Strengthened Staff Capacity and Political Will for Staff Reform

LSP works with the Secretariat and permanent staff to build capacity.

TRAINING

LSP advisors assess training needs, design materials, and conduct courses. Trainers include LSP staff, external Iraqi trainers, and international experts.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Internship Program supplements the capacity of the COR staff while exposing university graduates to the daily work of their legislature. Interns are placed in key committees and departments to support administrative, research, and management activities. LSP provides continuous training to the interns.

APRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Apprenticeship Program gives the COR access to mid-level professionals who provide short-term expertise to accomplish urgent tasks.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Research Fellowship Program provides experienced professionals, usually members of academia, to conduct in-depth, analytical research requested by COR committees. The Fellows' research helps to improve the quality of debate on key topics by offering timely, comprehensive, non-partisan and objective studies, background notes, reports and recommendations.



ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP developed an initial staff training curriculum for COR departments, offering courses in: Organizational Development, Rules of Procedure, Code of Conduct, Development of Parliamentary Committee Work, Budget Preparation, and a program in International Accounting Standards. LSP designed and implemented capacity building activities with numerous directorates and departments including:

- Office of Secretary General
- Parliamentary Affairs Directorate
- Media Directorate
- Research Directorate
- Information Technology Directorate
- Administration Directorate
- Provincial Offices Department of the Parliamentary Affairs Directorate
- Budget Research Department of the Research Directorate
- Human Resources Department of the Administration Directorate

LSP Fellows produced research papers on topics requested by the Members Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee (MAPDC), including: draft legislation on the ICPD; proposed amendments to draft legislation on COR bylaws; the political parties' law; and draft legislation on the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. The research papers were submitted to the MAPDC and utilized by committees in analyzing draft legislation.

Training

Since the beginning of the program LSP has delivered 85 training courses for 1,573 participants (309 female and 1,264 male). These figures also represent 533 (113 female) new, 'unique' trainees – individuals who had not previously attended LSP training events. A training quality control plan was developed and is being implemented. Many trainees have reported that they use the skills they learned to improve job performance, and the Program increasingly receives requests from staff and MPs for wide-ranging training.

Change Management Initiative (CMI)

A Change Management Initiative (CMI) was introduced to refocus the Secretariat on its core business of delivering services to MPs and helping the COR operate smoothly. The CMI recommendations will encompass human resources, staffing, additional training mechanisms for research, parliamentary process and specific parliamentary skills.

Information Technology

LSP continues to contribute to the improvement of Information Technology (IT) services. Increased use of modern information and communication technology supports transparency and accountability in the legislative process. The Legal Directorate was the first to be fully networked with LSP assistance. In coordination with the COR IT Directorate, LSP installed and monitored the "Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server" to identify any security threats in the COR network. This solution blocked more than 20 attempted virus attacks during a one-week period and identified 15 computers on the local network that were infected by virus or security threats. By reducing redundant and inappropriate downloads, the efficiency of internet usage was increased by 15 percent.

Fellowship Program

The Fellowship Program was launched to encourage experienced professionals, usually members of academia, to provide research to facilitate the important legislative work undertaken by the COR. Nine research papers have been provided to the Members Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee, Education Committee, and Regions and Governorates Committee, including:

- Rules of Procedure
- Budget Violations and Unconstitutional Allocations
- Election System
- Political Parties' Role in Democracy

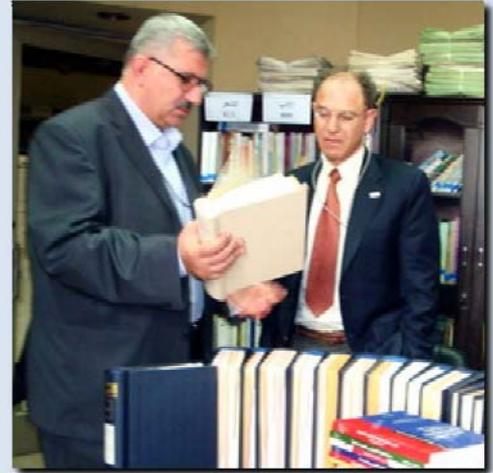
Future research papers are planned in response to requests received from the Complaints Committee, Human Rights Committee, Youth and Sports Committee, Oil and Gas Committee, and Economics Committee.



USAID Satisfies Information Needs of Iraqi Members of Parliament and Staff

New books on administrative law, government oversight, corruption, e-government and constitutional law were added to the shelves at the Council of Representatives Library.

As the parliament leads Iraq towards a democratic future, it must design and implement successful policies and develop effective political institutions. To achieve enduring solutions, Iraq's leaders must understand the context for political and legal reforms, including international and Iraqi experience in building democratic institutions. Such an understanding will also give a sense of pride in their new political institutions and affirm to members of the Council of Representatives (COR) that their legislative body is more than a tool to achieve narrow political interests.



Mr. Muhammed Abbas, the Head of the Library Department, receives books from the USAID Senior Governance Advisor Dr. Miles Toder

As a result of LSP engagement, Mohammad Abbas, Director of the Parliamentary Library, is promoting the importance of the Council of Representatives beyond its simple legislative function. To encourage MPs and their staffers to recognize the wider political and social importance of the Council of Representatives, Mr. Abbas has lined the library with photographs of other parliamentary libraries from around the world, subtly reminding visitors of the importance of the legislature's library in Iraq's transition to modernity.

To reinforce Abbas' institution-building efforts, the Legislative Strengthening Program has donated 40 books, compact discs, and journals to the library. All of these resources, which cover topics ranging from municipal election procedures to prosecuting cases of public corruption, address the core challenges faced by a new legislature in a nascent democracy. More than assisting the COR in drafting legislation and overseeing the executive branch, these resources provide global and historic perspectives on today's political decisions. Abbas observes, *"Our library is young, and although it is small, it is utilized by many people who are studying complex issues facing our country. Beyond providing facts and lessons from foreign jurisdictions, the resources provided by USAID/LSP reiterate my message regarding the institutional importance of the COR in transforming Iraq."*

Mr. Abbas' message resonates with the library's visitors. Mr. Laith Hassan Ali, a staff member of the COR Research Department, frequented the library to conduct research during oversight of the National Budget. Mr. Laith explains, *"I used USAID/LSP-provided materials in the parliamentary library to research budget preparation and budget-related issues. The materials LSP added to our library assisted me in formulating a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the budget process."*

An increasingly busy librarian, Mr. Abbas observes that on average, MPs and staff borrow 100 books per week -- and that number has been steadily increasing. Space has also become an issue, with over 273 MPs, plus secretariat staff, and committee assistants using the facilities. A new challenge Mr. Abbas faces -- albeit a welcome one -- is to get the books returned in a timely fashion!

Streamlined Parliamentary Process and Improved Committee Operations

USAID/LSP works with committee chairs, members, and staff to improve the process of legislation.

MODERNIZATION

LSP is assisting the COR to establish an intranet to enable the secure sharing of information and documents. An automated legislative tracking system that provides timely information about the stages and amendments of legislation before Parliament is in the initial stages of development.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

LSP is providing technical assistance to the Research Directorate regarding amendments to the Rules of Procedure. The Program provides advice and training on best practices to improve committee operations, such as on the improved quality, accuracy and availability of committee agendas, draft laws and documents.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP's support for office automation systems was initiated in pilot directorates.

LSP has partnered with several committees to provide models of best practices and develop staff capacity to support the committees including:

- Members' Affairs Parliamentary Development Committee
- Women, Family, and Children's Committee
- Finance Committee
- Civil Society Organizations Committee
- Agriculture, Water, and Marshes Committee
- Education Committee

LSP produced a paper on the special legal status of Parliament, the concept of parliamentary privilege, and the rights and responsibilities of MPs as office holders.

“We are representatives of the Iraqi people. In addition to having an obligation to pursue their interests, we have the privilege of tapping the collective wisdom of an educated society that can trace its roots to the beginning of civilization.”

Education Committee Chairman Alaa Makki, after USAID/LSP assisted his Committee to produce its first bi-weekly newsletter available by e-mail to teachers and parents.



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Legislative Research

USAID/LSP donated 40 books, compact discs, and journals to the COR library. All of these resources, which cover topics, ranging from municipal election procedures to prosecuting cases of public corruption, address the core challenges faced by a new legislature in an emerging democracy. More than assisting the COR in drafting legislation and overseeing the executive branch, these resources provide global and historical perspectives on today's political decisions.

Education Committee Leads the Way in Increasing Transparency

Committee Uses Biweekly Newsletter to Inform the Public of its Work



Iraq's new parliament, the Council of Representatives (COR), is tasked with governing the country in an open and responsive manner. The Education Committee is setting an example for the rest of the COR through the publication of a biweekly newsletter.

This newsletter describes the committee's activities, outlines its agenda, and invites comments and suggestions from the general public. Available by e-mail to teachers and

parents, the newsletter explains how and why education policy is being changed in Iraq. In addition, it encourages public participation in the policymaking process. Education Committee Chairman Alaa Makki explains, "We are representatives of the Iraqi people. In addition to having an obligation to pursue their interests, we have the privilege of tapping the collective wisdom of an educated society that can trace its roots to the beginning of civilization."

Publishing the newsletter is a new responsibility for committee staffer Ahmed Jassim Muhammed. As little as three weeks earlier, Ahmed did not have a clear sense of his responsibilities. He recalls, "While my colleagues and I were eager to assist the committee, we were very inefficient because we lacked clear delineations of responsibility and authority." Recognizing this weakness, USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP) worked with the committee staff to clarify their roles, helping them draft terms of reference and define the management structure through the use of an organizational chart. At the request of the committee staff, LSP also demonstrated how useful outreach can be to the legislative process and worked with the committee to develop a regular newsletter. Now that Ahmed's role is clear, he is able to concentrate on the important work of increasing the committee's transparency and take ownership of the newsletter for the committee.

The increased organization and transparency of the Education Committee has captured the attention of other COR committees. Eager to emulate their counterparts, seven other committees have requested similar support from LSP. The LSP team looks forward to continuing to assist the COR in increasing institutional transparency.



The Education Committee's first biweekly newsletter

USAID/LSP Encourages Network Redesign for Increased IT Security

Legal Directorate is first unit to incorporate new network infrastructure design

Security in information technology is critical to the successful functioning of any government institution. With the help of the Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP), the Council of Representatives (COR) has taken the first steps in modifying its existing IT infrastructure to create a more secure system.

The previous design of the COR's IT infrastructure connected each department's switch – a device that links individual computers to the larger network – with the switches of other departments in a chaotic chain of connections. In this design, each individual computer was connected to every other computer in all departments. A virus or other malicious program that gained access to one computer could thus spread to every other computer in the COR.

The lack of password policies added to the weakness of the design. Without specific requirements, passwords were short and never changed, thereby making them easy to guess.

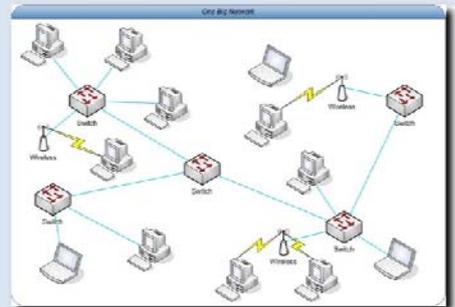
In February 2009, LSP began working with the COR's IT Directorate to configure a new system design that would enhance IT security. LSP held training events to explain the weaknesses in the previous design and the benefits of the new system.

In the new design, each COR unit's switch will be connected only to a central switch. The computers in each department will no longer be able to access computers in other departments, which will significantly limit the chances of spreading computer viruses.

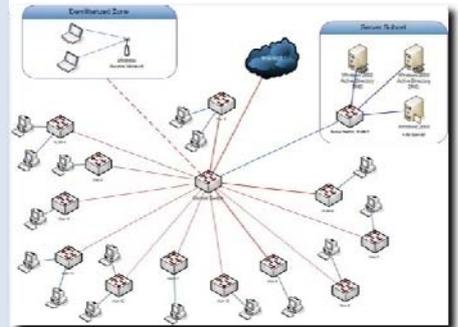
The Program also helped the IT Directorate create password complexity requirements for all computers. Passwords must meet length and character specifications and must be changed every 45 days.

In early September 2009, LSP and the IT Directorate successfully connected the first unit – the Legal Directorate – to the central switch. The IT Directorate will continue connecting the remaining directorates and departments according to the new design, and LSP will supervise and help with troubleshooting.

By summer 2010, LSP and the IT Directorate hope to create a highly secure network with hacking detection and prevention systems and firewalls that will block unauthorized access to the COR's network.



The previous system linked all COR computers in one big network through a chaotic chain of connections



The new design has a central switch, to which each COR unit will be connected independently

Strengthened Oversight and Budget Review Capacity

LSP supports the COR to review and analyze the national budget for the upcoming year and strengthens its capacity for its oversight function.

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE BUDGET

LSP provides ongoing mentoring to committees, MPs and staff. LSP staff are evaluating the current budget process in the COR in order to strengthen research and programmatic approaches. It will be benchmarked to OECD standards.

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, MINISTRIES AND COMMISSIONS

Even the best laws will be ineffective unless their application is monitored. LSP is increasing the committees' ability to oversee laws and to evaluate the fiscal impact of legislation. To promote improved communication between the COR and Ministries, LSP is assisting with compilation of an inventory of government statutory and non-statutory documents and reports needed by the COR. LSP provides guidance on how to summon Ministers or their representatives and hold special hearings.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP provided technical assistance – through events ranging from small group workshops to larger seminars – to MPs, their staff, various committees and the Budget Research Department (BRD).

A detailed, in-depth analysis of the COR involvement in the FY09 Budget process was completed and reviewed with key counterparts.

A series of training events was held to strengthen the oversight and budget review capacity of the BRD and Finance Committee staff members. BRD staff members demonstrate increasing critical understanding of the budget oversight process.

LSP produced a report on the role of the Iraqi Board of the Supreme Auditor.

LSP launched the Iraqi Professors Educating Parliament (IPEP) initiative by assisting two Baghdad University professors in developing seminars and workshops for BRD and COR researchers.



Budget and Oversight

USAID/LSP support for budget analysis, as an element of democratic governance to increase accountability and transparency, has increased awareness (approaching a consensus) that a dedicated budget office is needed. LSP will work in collaboration with the COR to advance the creation of an independent budget office to improve budget debate and analysis.

Less than one year after its establishment, the COR's Budget Research Department (BRD), with LSP assistance, produced a 50-page analysis of Iraq's FY2010 Budget that includes commentary, financial analysis, graphs and illustrations presented in a clear and logical format. The detailed and thorough analysis was unprecedented at the COR. It was impartial and practical, and provided readers for the first time with substance and useful facts. Using skills developed during LSP training sessions, BRD staff members have presented their analysis to a number of COR committees.

“Not only have we acquired an understanding of the fundamentals of International Accounting Standards and how to incorporate these compliance mechanisms into our work, but now we can help the Iraqi Parliament administer the money of the Iraqi people more effectively.”

Financial Directorate senior staff member, after the “International Accounting Standards for Government” seminar.

The budget and fiscal management training activities conducted by the Program have also led to increased and systematized communication and clarity between the COR's directorates and its committees. By inviting the BRD and various committees to participate in workshops together, LSP has helped the groups realize the benefits of information sharing for increased transparency. Workshops now bring together staff of several committees, the BRD, and representatives from various directorates to create a comprehensive understanding of budget analysis and fiscal management at the COR.



Workshops Promote Parliamentary Dialogue on Financial Oversight

The Budget Research Department shares public spending data with the Finance Committee

The directorates of the Council of Representatives (COR) were established to provide institutional support to Iraqi MPs. To date, the COR has yet to systematize communication between the directorates and its committees, meaning that much of the directorates' work is underutilized. USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP), through its training activities, is tightening the bonds between the directorates and the committees.

Since 2008, the Program conducted an extensive series of workshops on budget and fiscal management for the Budget Research Directorate (BRD). In December 2008, LSP invited members and staff of the Finance Committee to attend. The course, in which LSP trainers present comparative examples of accounting and budget oversight tools from other countries to develop a set of best practices for Iraq, relies heavily on group discussion. During one class discussion in June, the participants discovered that the BRD had a data set that the Finance Committee needed for constructive oversight of the budget. The BRD immediately shared the information -- actual figures on government spending. This information will allow the committee to compare predicted spending with actual spending; thereby permitting increased accuracy of future budgetary predictions.

This experience demonstrated the importance of communication between offices. Finance Committee Chairman Ms. Alaa Al-Sa'doon observes, *"The information provided by the BRD will allow my committee to study legislation and government activity with enhanced precision. I look forward to working with the BRD on a regular basis to better represent the interests of the Iraqi people."* By facilitating ad hoc cooperation between COR directorates and committees, LSP encourages the COR to systematize these linkages thereby improving its overall performance.



LSP trainers coach the staff of the Finance Committee in budget oversight

Improving Government Accountability

Iraq's Legislature Raises the Standard of Fiscal Transparency

USAID trained Members of Parliament and key staff in the Iraqi Council of Representatives on the adoption of International Accounting Standards

Creating accountability and transparency in government is vital to the developing democracy of Iraq. Citizens of the new Iraq are beginning to demand higher standards from those who represent them in government. Moreover, the Iraqi government must subscribe to the benchmarks of the world financial community in order to meet current obligations and attract international investment and donor assistance.

The Iraq Financial Management Law requires all government entities to prepare and present financial statements in accordance with International Accounting Standards (IAS). As part of the ongoing momentum of reform in Iraq, members of the Iraqi legislature recognized the legal necessity to comply with these standards.

Representatives of USAID's Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP) met with the Council of Representative's (COR) Financial Directorate to discuss how USAID could help train Members of Parliament and key staff in understanding and incorporating IAS into the work of the COR.

In December 2008, twenty-five legislators and senior staff began a six-day seminar on "International Accounting Standards for Government," jointly organized by the COR Financial Directorate and LSP. The event was part of the on-going "Budget Execution and Oversight" LSP seminar series.

Seminar participants were shown reporting methods used by other countries under the International Accounting Standards and then contrasted them with existing Iraqi accounting standards. LSP trainers explained how to apply IAS within the framework of typical reports required by the Iraqi Ministry of Finance. In one exercise, COR legislators and staff learned to prepare and present transparent financial statements.

After the seminar, a senior staff member of the COR Financial Directorate remarked, "Not only have we acquired an understanding of the fundamentals of International Accounting Standards and how to incorporate these compliance mechanisms into our work, but now we can help the Iraqi Parliament administer the money of the Iraqi people more effectively."

Parliamentarians and their staff will apply the new skills as they oversee and interact with the executive branch, for example, in the current push to approve the national budget. With LSP assistance the legislature is raising the standard for government accountability and fiscal transparency for the new Iraq.

"I used LSP-provided materials in the parliamentary library to research budget preparation and budget-related issues. The materials LSP added to our library assisted me in formulating a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the budget process."

Research Department staff member Laith Hassan Ali, who frequented the library to conduct research during oversight of the National Budget.



Participants at the six-day seminar on International Accounting Standards at the Iraqi Council of Representatives

LSP is assisting the COR to better represent citizens and constituencies. In order to increase transparency of the legislative process, LSP is working with the media and civil society. LSP is increasing capacity of staff in the COR's provincial offices so that they provide better representation services, constituency services, and civic education.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Provincial Offices Department expanded its reach to the provinces, establishing a total of 14 offices throughout Iraq, with a goal of opening 18 offices by the end of 2009.

LSP and the Provincial Offices Department provided training to Provincial Office Directors.

The Media Directorate has been engaged in outreach and television production training events which will be used in producing education information for outreach to the public and civil society.

LSP conducted a workshop for civil society organizations explaining how they can use an open legislative process to influence draft legislation.

LSP held a training course for journalists to improve their techniques for interviewing MPs. LSP also held a workshop for NGOs to assist them in developing a communications strategy to influence the NGO Law.

LSP held a four-day intermediate-level training workshop for the Directors of Provincial Offices in Erbil. Seventeen participants attended the workshop including the Director of the Parliamentary Affairs Directorate and the Director of the Provincial Offices. The training generated a mission statement for the provincial offices, a list of objectives and activities for the offices, and a code of conduct for provincial staff.

LSP cooperated with a partner NGO, the "Development Organization for Students and Young People," to develop a youth parliament and to strengthen the NGO as a civil society organization in the legislative community.



Provincial Offices

USAID/LSP assisted the COR provincial offices to clarify their role, prepare a mission statement, and adopt a code of conduct. Provincial offices allow for increased access of the Iraqi people to their federal representatives so that they can more readily convey their concerns and priorities with the intent of shaping policy. LSP training workshops have brought together directors and staff of provincial offices to communicate with each other and collaborate in the areas of strategic planning, modern management, report writing, and constituency outreach. LSP is planning to provide initial stocks of reference books for the libraries in each provincial office. As the utilization of provincial offices by MPs continues to expand, The Program will provide increasing amounts of technical assistance and limited commodities to the offices.

Communications

LSP has considerably strengthened the representation function of the COR through its support to committees. For example, the Education Committee now publishes a biweekly newsletter that describes the committee's activities, outlines its agenda, and invites comments and suggestions from the general public. Available by e-mail to teachers and parents, the newsletter explains how and why education policy is being changed in Iraq. With LSP technical assistance, the Women's Committee prepared and issued press releases which increased transparency. After LSP training and assistance, the Civil Society Committee hosted the COR's first open public hearing on the committee's upcoming draft legislation on unions and associations, a milestone in the advancement of the parliament.

“I have always struggled to interview parliamentarians. I oscillated between being too deferential and being too combative. This workshop showed me how to interview MPs rigorously but respectfully. I recognize that the public will be best able to hold politicians accountable if I encourage the MP to respond clearly to his critics, whose views I must also report.”

Reporter of Iraq Republican Radio Hiba Mohammed Malik, after attending USAID/LSP's workshop for journalists covering the COR.

LSP trained independent journalists in interviewing techniques for reporting on the COR. By including journalists from outlets of all different ethnic and sectarian backgrounds, with perspectives that varied from religiously conservative to secular, the workshop encouraged the participants to identify as journalists, and move beyond advocating narrow perspectives. As part of the workshop, the journalists interviewed Members of Parliament to help them understand the critical role of media in a democratic society.



USAID/LSP Assists in Bringing the National Government to Iraqi Communities

USAID is working to enlighten and support the Provincial Managers to fulfill their jobs in the provinces

In the last two years, the Iraqi Council of Representatives (COR) has been working to expand its presence outside of Baghdad bringing the national government closer to Iraqis by opening 14 parliamentary outreach offices located throughout the country.

Parliamentary Outreach Offices assist in linking Parliamentarians to their constituencies, while providing Iraqi citizens with access to their government. This promotes citizens' access to services and their ability to obtain government assistance. Parliamentary Outreach Offices have rapidly mobilized throughout the country, but personnel require training and support to conduct their important outreach work.

In April 2009, LSP, along with the Provincial Offices Department (POD) of the COR, brought together 11 directors of the various offices for an intense week-long training session. Attendees participated in 40 hours of training focused on Strategic Planning, Modern Management, and Report Writing. LSP senior staff also held a round-table discussion with the staff to better understand their concerns and needs, to help in developing a strategic plan to guide constituency outreach through these offices.

Mr. Juma Abbas, the Duhoc Province Office Director, stated that he planned to implement changes, based on what he learned from his fellow Office Directors, as soon as he returned to his office.

This session was the first time that all of the Directors had been able to interact and learn from each other's experiences. The Director of the Provincial Offices Unit, Mr. Abdul Allah Hussain, was pleased he was finally able to bring his Directors together in shared training events.

The variety of services and resources available in each office varies greatly based upon the security situation and the time the office has had to develop. Sharing experiences and ideas for the first time was a critical part of the success of the event.

The Program will continue its engagement with the COR's Provincial Offices to increase Parliamentarians' outreach to Iraqis while assisting citizens to access their government from their own communities.



Roundtable meeting with LSP staff to discuss the challenges of offering outreach services to MPs

Provincial Parliamentary Offices Lead the Way to a Representative and Responsive Parliament

USAID/LSP trains provincial directors in leadership, outreach, management, and planning skills

Directors of the Iraq Council of Representatives (COR) provincial offices are the face of the nation’s legislature outside Baghdad. These offices carry out some of the most important functions of Iraq’s burgeoning democracy: representation, constituent services, and outreach. For four days in early August, eighteen provincial directors learned the importance of these functions at an intensive training course sponsored by the USAID Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP). The training followed the success of a previous one-hour LSP workshop for 40 COR staff members.

The 18 participants gathered in Erbil, where LSP staff coached them on how to undertake and maintain operations and direct staff work in the COR’s provincial legislative offices. LSP trainers worked side-by-side with the provincial directors and with the directors general of parliamentary affairs and the provincial offices.

It was an unprecedented opportunity for the participants to communicate with each other and collaborate on developing the work of the COR’s provincial offices. The training covered issues of significance to the participants, including organizing events and press conferences.

Workshop participants agreed the week was an unparalleled success. They said the training provided a sense of direction and mission for their managers. Haider Muthanna, the Director General of the Parliamentary Affairs Directorate, said, *“This is the first time that the provincial offices received specialized and specific training to provide them with the necessary skills to do the job.”*



Haider Muthanna speaks to provincial directors during the Erbil training course

Abdullah Hussein, Director General of Provincial Offices Department, noted positive and constructive results in the immediate initiatives of the provincial offices. The Diwaniya Provincial Office organized a seminar with the Environment Department to discuss sewage and drainage problems. The Erbil Provincial Office held a press conference for Erbil MPs to discuss the two most recent attacks with explosive devices in Shihana and Khazna villages. And the Al-Najaf Provincial Office prepared its own bylaws.

Mr. Hussein has asked LSP to conduct further workshops in Erbil to train and mentor casework staff from different regions of Iraq.

USAID/LSP Shapes Iraq's Emerging Media Culture

USAID/LSP uses a workshop for journalists to demonstrate the proper role of the press in a democratic system

Increasingly, the Iraqi people are able to hold their government accountable through the democratic process. The Iraqi media has a critical role to play; the people cannot judge their government

if they are not aware of its actions. But in Iraq, where there were no press freedoms before 2003, the media has yet to settle into its proper position within the democratic process.

Recognizing that an effective media establishment can compel Iraq's Council of Representatives (COR) to become more responsive to the public, USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP) is working to assist journalists who routinely cover parliament. A three-day workshop held in June 2009 for reporters covering the COR raised awareness about the importance of independence and objectivity when reporting on the affairs of parliament.

The immediate aim of the workshop was to improve the effectiveness of journalists as they interview Members of Parliament. But the indirect consequence of the workshop was far more important. By including journalists from outlets of all different ethnic and sectarian backgrounds with perspectives that varied from religiously conservative to secular, the workshop encouraged the participants to identify as journalists, rather than as mouthpieces for a particular perspective. The specific practice of interviewing Members of Parliament was used to increase the journalists' understanding of the critical role of media in a democratic society. While the media is expected to hold decision makers accountable, it must do so indirectly, by reporting the facts and allowing the public to respond; it is not the role of a journalist to aggressively confront politicians.

Over the course of the workshop, the journalists came to understand the distinction. Reporter Hiba Mohammed Malik of Iraq Republican Radio explains, *"I have always struggled to interview parliamentarians. I oscillated between being too deferential and being too combative. This workshop showed me how to interview MPs rigorously but respectfully. I recognize that the public will be best able to hold politicians accountable if I encourage the MP to respond clearly to his critics, whose views I must also report."* By cultivating a culture of balanced, objective journalism, USAID/LSP will help the Iraqi people hold their representatives responsible for their performance. This will in turn encourage the COR to increase its effectiveness.



Halla Nasser of the Al-Sabah newspaper learns about the distinction between reporting and advocacy

Improved Donor Coordination and Development Planning

LSP is supporting the COR's ability to coordinate its donors to reduce the potential for overlapping programs and inefficiency. LSP assisted the COR to establish and maintain a donor database, prepare a donor guide, and establish a donor liaison office in the COR. LSP advisors will also assist the COR to develop a medium-term Strategic Development Plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The first donor coordination meeting facilitated by the MAPDC provided the COR with an initial opportunity to demonstrate a leadership role in setting training priorities and coordinating donor efforts to meet these goals.

LSP assisted the MAPDC in organizing the second quarterly donor coordination meeting. Ten donors and implementers attended along with most members of the ICPD Interim Board, the COR Secretary General, and the DG of the Media Directorate. By bringing the donors together, the COR was able to better identify its needs for them while avoiding duplication.

LSP held a seminar on good and minimum standards for parliaments in coordination with the MAPDC.

"I am delighted to hold such an historic meeting to exchange ideas and information with new friends, with whom we share the goal of supporting and enhancing the legislative institutions of Iraq."

MAPDC Committee Chairman Hussam Al-Azawi, at a meeting of donor representatives organized by USAID/LSP.



Iraqi Parliament Poised to Coordinate Donor Initiatives

USAID is working with the Council of Representatives to better manage and harmonize donor assistance programs

Since its inception the Iraqi parliament has been eagerly assisted by numerous international donors, but an imperfect understanding about donor programs has so far only resulted in ad hoc initiatives. Under its Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP), USAID is supporting the Council of Representatives (COR) to better manage donor coordination. A very visible first step was a meeting of donor representatives organized on February 12, 2009 by the Members' Affairs Parliamentary Development Committee (MAPDC). The Committee, which is responsible for issues related to Members of Parliament, their development, and benefits, also plays a lead role in coordinating the activities of donors.

At the recent meeting, MAPDC Committee Chairman Mr. Hussam Al-Azawi expressed the gratitude of the COR to donors for their support. *"I am delighted to hold such an historic meeting to exchange ideas and information with new friends, with whom we share the goal of supporting and enhancing the legislative institutions of Iraq."* Donors were then invited to exchange information about their activities in support of the parliament.

Behind the scenes, MAPDC and LSP staff have launched a joint effort to collect and consolidate information about all donor assistance programs in the COR, and to build and maintain a current database of this information. Mr. Hussam followed up the donor meeting by requesting donors to submit the information needed to populate the database. A printed summary of donor programs will be prepared periodically and distributed within the COR so that the staff and Members of Parliament have a clear picture. Equally important, the summary will help donors to better design and implement their initiatives. This will gain increasing importance later in 2009 as the MAPDC prepares a mid-term development strategy for the COR.

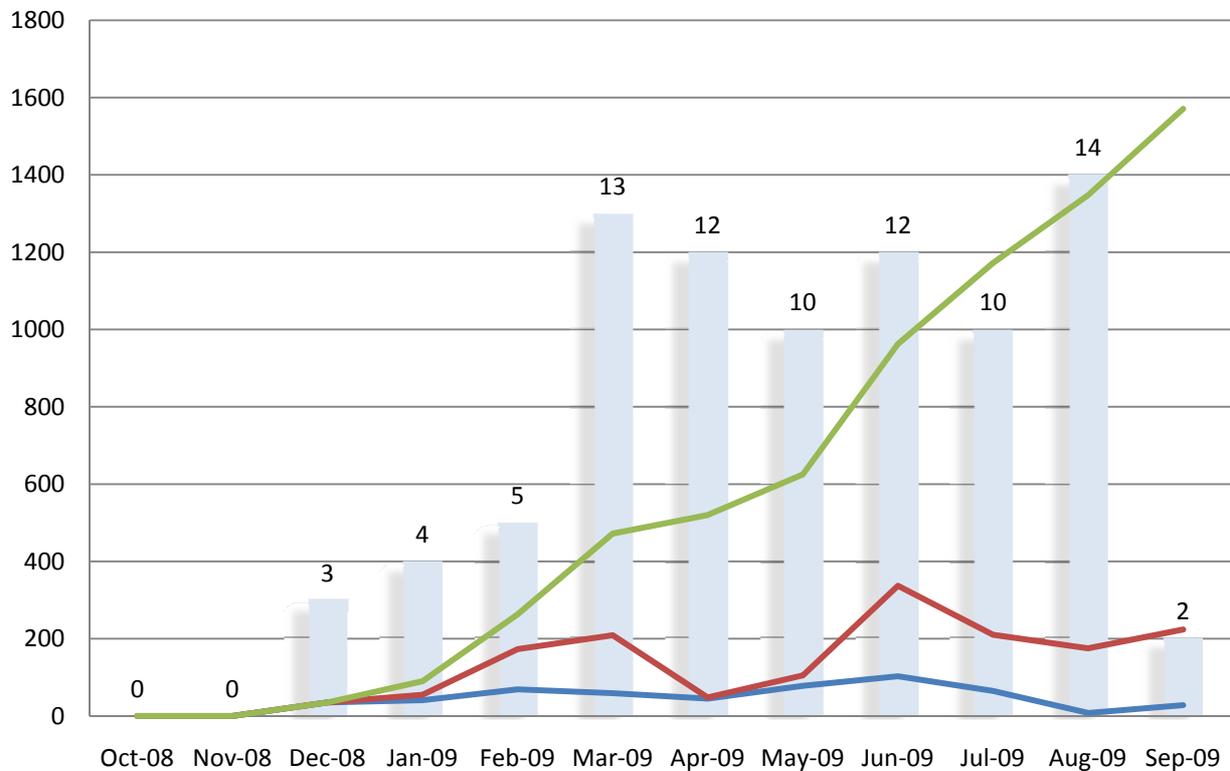


Chairman Al-Azawi (on the left) asked attendees to continue working together toward the shared goal of strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi Parliament

As Mr. Hussam explained at the coordination meeting, the COR will work actively with donors to determine the most productive roles, to minimize duplication, and gain the benefits of better coordination and collaboration.

TRAINING ACHIEVEMENTS IN FIGURES

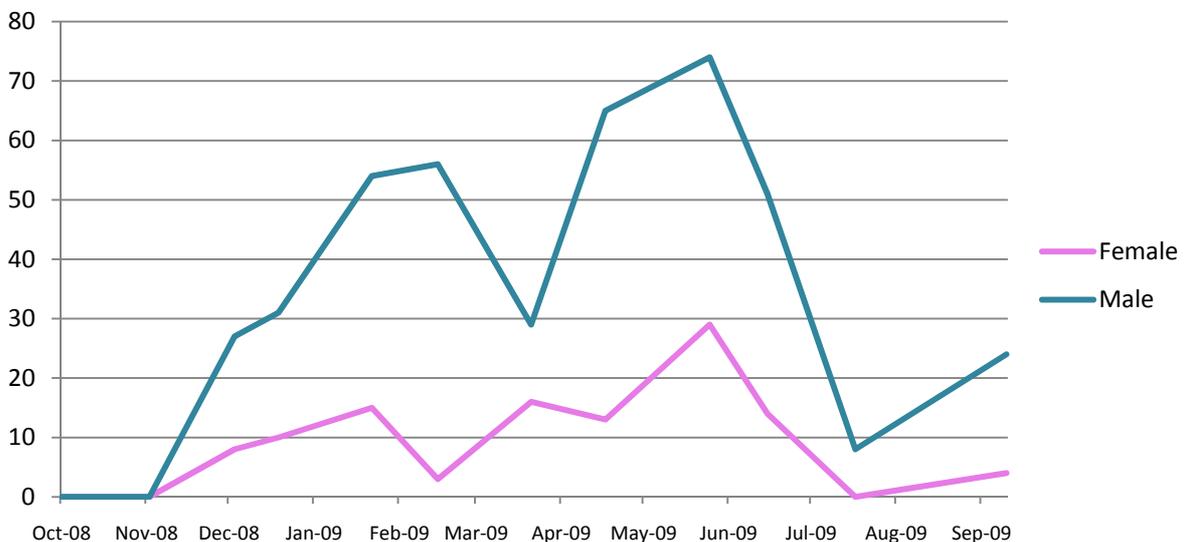
LSP Year One Training Statistics



- Total number of training sessions conducted
- Number of 'unique' trainees (individuals who had not previously attended any LSP training events)
- Total number of participants trained per month
- Cumulative number of participants trained

Male/Female Participation in Training Events

Number of 'unique' trainees disaggregated by gender



PROJECT TIMELINE



OCT - DEC 2008

JAN – MARCH 2009

APRIL – JUNE 2009

JULY – SEP 2009

LSP mobilized project staff and opened offices in Baghdad and in the COR to implement activities and tasks. Amidst a relatively stable atmosphere in the Iraqi Parliament, LSP began with successful meetings with the Speaker and Directors General of the Council of Representatives (COR). Stakeholders agreed that priorities for the COR included capacity building and institutional development. For the latter priority, the COR confirmed its desire to see the Program support the creation of the Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD) with facilities and resources to offer training, research and mentoring to MPs and staff.

The Speaker nominated an interim Director General of the ICPD and created an interim Board of Directors. And LSP initiated preliminary training courses and mentoring sessions, including staff training on “The Development of the Work System for Committees.” LSP facilitated the establishment of the Budget Research Department led by one international expert and embedded the unit in the COR Research Directorate to provide basic skills assistance for analyzing the 2009 GOI budget. Deliverables provided to the COR and USAID include:

- Delivery and approval of the annual work plan
- Preparation, revision and finalization of the “Comparative Review of Parliamentary Institutes”
- Delivery of a draft design for the Performance Management Plan (PMP)
- Initial curriculum for the first round of legislative staff training events

OCT - DEC 2008

JAN – MARCH 2009

APRIL – JUNE 2009

JULY – SEP 2009

LSP sought to build on the momentum established in the program’s first quarter by continuing to provide focused training events in a number of COR directorates and committees. The project began work with the committees on best practices in budget review and enhanced the mentoring of the budget research department (BRD).

LSP launched its program for provincial outreach development with a five-day intense training in Baghdad on management and administration for the directors of the provincial offices.

Deliverables provided by LSP include:

- Completion of a guide for participants in the Internship Program
- Finalization of a guide for participants in the Fellowship Program
- A Performance Management Plan for use by key beneficiaries in the COR to measure its improvements over time

In April, USAID, LSP, and members of the Members' Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee (MAPDC) met with the newly elected COR Speaker, Mr. Ayad Al Samarai, to present the LSP program. The Speaker expressed his full support for the program and urged the MAPDC to expedite the legislation required to establish the ICPD as a legal entity.

LSP, in cooperation with the MAPDC, selected the first round of participants in the COR's Fellowship Program. Working with their committees, the Fellows identified their research topics, which ranged from analyses of specific legislation to broader topics such as the COR's impact on the lives of citizens.

LSP presented Microsoft SharePoint software to the Director General for the COR IT Directorate, Mr. Majed Hameed, and technical advisor to the Speaker, Dr. Abdul Sattar. Both officials recognized the importance of introducing document sharing software to the COR, particularly in streamlining the legislative drafting process. As a first step, LSP finished installing six central servers and began the process of connecting all offices to the centralized computer network.

In addition to directly strengthening the COR, LSP began working to increase public oversight and input in the policymaking process. In June, LSP held a workshop for civil society organizations demonstrating how they could use an open legislative process to more effectively influence government policy. LSP offered a media training course for journalists entitled "The Art and Craft of the Interview," which focused on preparing journalists to objectively question MPs.

Deliverables provided by LSP include:

- Curriculum for second round of legislative staff training events
- Six Fellows began their research under the LSP's Fellowship Program
- Installation of six central servers completed to connect all offices to the centralized computer network



USAID/LSP launched the Iraqi Professors Educating Parliament (IPEP) initiative, in which prominent Baghdad University professors develop seminars and workshops to instruct researchers in the COR. Two professors – Dr. Saad Salman, deputy dean of Baghdad University's Technical College, and Mr. Mohammad Salman Kareem, deputy dean of the university's Higher Institute for Accounting and Banking Studies – led seminars on budget analysis in August.



During a four-day intensive training workshop in Erbil, LSP coached 18 provincial office directors in some of the most important functions of Iraq's burgeoning democracy: representation, constituent services and outreach. The Provincial Offices Department noted immediate positive results in some provinces. An intense 3-day follow-up training and workshop was held for 'complaints staff' of the provincial offices to improve their ability to manage casework and effectively represent parliament to constituents.

LSP evaluated the organizational and governance structure of the ICPD and prepared job descriptions for positions in the various divisions. The Program also worked with the directors of the three divisions and the Director General to prepare the roles and responsibilities of the ICPD Chairman and governing board.

During a three-day retreat the LSP technical and management team prepared the program's second-year work plan. The team reviewed progress made during the first year, identified opportunities to enhance the program and incorporated measures to improve program management and operations.

Deliverables provided by LSP include:

- The Model Committee Operating Manual
- Guide to Resources to Assist/Support Parliament (Links for Parliamentary Resources)
- Paper on Parliamentary Law, Privilege, Order, and Decorum
- Paper on Enhancing Respect for Parliament
- The COR Network Security Report
- Work Procedures Manual for Complaints Office in the Iraqi Parliament



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Knowledge of the COR's evolving needs, challenges and priorities, combined with lessons learned by LSP during the first year of project implementation, has enabled the LSP team to propose some new initiatives in its work for the second year of program implementation:

- Renovate and equip the former National Council building and initiate operations of the Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development.
- Roll out the Change Management Initiative commencing with a major strategic planning retreat for the COR's senior management team.
- Support the COR in planning and delivering an Orientation and Training Program for newly-elected MPs following the national elections scheduled for early 2010.
- Collaborate with the COR to advance the creation of an independent budget office to improve budget debate and analysis. As the provincial outreach offices develop,
- Expand support to more regions of Iraq. LSP will assist the COR to institute quarterly donor meetings to clarify roles, minimize duplication, and ensure coordination.

LSP is entering its second year of providing technical support, and is poised to assist the COR in the transition period following the upcoming elections. Developments and achievements of activities to date are a solid base for future initiatives and will strengthen the foundations of the COR as the new parliament is seated and begins its work.

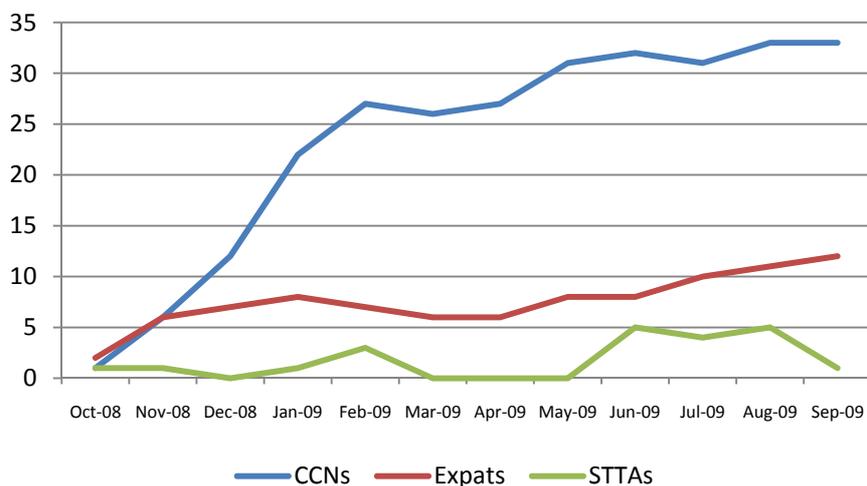


PROGRAM MANAGEMENT



PERSONNEL

LSP's expatriate long and short-term staff brings international best practices in parliamentary development to the program. Iraqi staff provides critical knowledge about their politics, history, and institutions to the program. Working together, the team is able to recommend the best possible solutions to the COR. The chart below depicts LSP's hiring trend over the last year.



LSP is committed to providing local staff with opportunities to develop professionally and to play an increasingly active role in implementing the program. Many local staff members hold substantive positions on the LSP team. LSP training delivered in the COR is increasingly delivered by Iraqis to ensure that best practices globally are adapted to the specific conditions that Iraq faces.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The LSP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Communications Team produces a continuous stream of news summaries, success stories, COR bulletins, photographs, and promotional materials to ensure that the program's message is distributed locally, nationally, and internationally, encompassing every aspect of LSP's partnership with the Council of Representatives. The team is currently designing the program website [www.iraqlsp.com] which will be available to the public soon.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation in post-conflict settings present a number of challenges including problematic data sources and a security situation that constrains survey work and monitoring activities. With these challenges in focus, LSP through rigorous collaboration with the USAID Democracy and Governance Office developed an effective means of tracking results at both output and outcome level in its Performance Management Plan (PMP). Program results are tracked based on training courses delivered, skills acquired through training, systems improvements resulting from new skills and methods of operating, all of which are the result of targeted technical assistance from LSP. Currently, the program's results framework includes 21 Performance Indicators and two USG/Agency-level Indicators.