



USAID
من الشعب الأمريكي

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

برنامج دعم وتطوير البرلمان | بروگرامي بيشنگيري اوبه ره بيدان بهرله مان

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

Contract No: 263-I-03-06-00015-00

REDI Task Order No. 3

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

ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR 2

OCTOBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010

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Management Systems International

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Courtesy of the Media Department, Iraq Council of Representatives

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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
MPDP	Members Professional Development Program
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	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government



INTRODUCTION

The Iraq 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 performance, transparency, and accountability.

The LSP team is comprised of international and local specialists who are building the capacity of Iraq's Members of Parliament (MPs) to debate laws in a formal, constructive environment and, together with the parliamentary staff, form and run parliamentary committees, analyze and consider proposed legislation. These activities improve the functioning of the Presidency Council, and increase the ability of Parliament to oversee the executive branch, review and analyze the national budget, bring the national government closer to constituents in the provinces and ensure, primarily through the committee system, greater participation of political parties from all factions and regions.

As LSP entered its second year, it began implementing a new Work Plan which reflected a deeper understanding of the COR's evolving needs and challenges. While developments and achievements of the first year provided a foundation for the year under review, LSP encountered a wide range of challenges, including delays in the formation of government that required adjustments to the year's planned activities.



CONTRACT AT A GLANCE

USAID LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

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

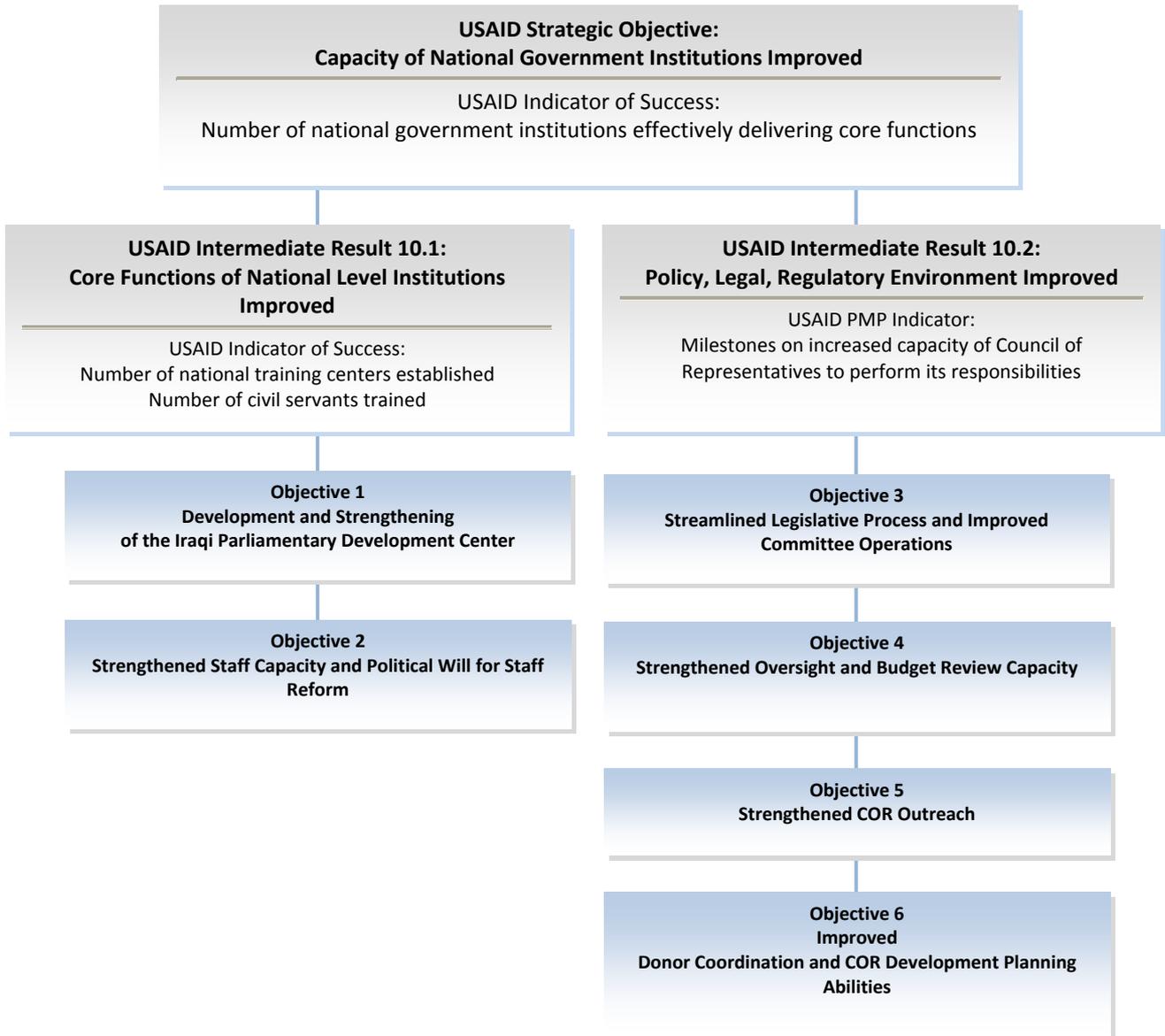
Contract Number:	263-I-03-06-00015-00 (REDI Task Order No. 3)
Start Date:	October 1, 2008
Ceiling Amount:	\$46,782,030
Obligated Amount:	\$46,782,030
End Date:	March 31, 2012
USAID Programmatic Alignment:	USAID/Iraq Strategic Objective 10: Improve the Capacity of the National Government USAID/Iraq Intermediate 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



USAID/LSP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The Legislative Strengthening Program is designed to support a wider USAID global program that seeks, especially in transition states, to improve the capacity of national government institutions.

Support for democratic governance in a highly fluid, post-transition political environment involves a number of risks. USAID’s work in Iraq, however, seeks to address the development challenge through a series of project-level results and outcomes based on a set of critical assumptions underlying the program’s design.



FOREWORD

Iraq's Council of Representatives remains committed to continued democratic development, bridging political divides, and creating an atmosphere for growth and stability. Between September of 2009 and October of 2010, the COR faced many challenges, including elections and a post-election period that required newly elected MPs to work together to overcome unprecedented challenges.

Throughout this time, LSP remained a committed partner in the COR's mission to create a more responsive and democratic Parliament. LSP continues to cultivate strong partnerships with the parliamentary leadership, committees, and the various directorates. The LSP-supported Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development will be a new COR directorate that will reflect and implement the vision laid out by the COR Presidency Council to contribute to ongoing institutional development of the COR.



LSP continues to work hard in other critical areas. It has increased the capacity of the COR to conduct budget analyses and oversight, and has been instrumental in significantly increasing the distribution of the budget within the COR. Further, my colleagues in the COR's administration and I are working closely with LSP to review the administrative structure of the Parliament and develop a plan to reform human resources.

LSP plays a vital role by supporting the COR's mission of developing and maintaining a democratic, independent and auspicious Iraqi Parliament.

Amjad Abdul Hameed Abdul Majeed

*Secretary General
Council of Representatives*

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

USAID LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

A Year of Progress: New Developments in the Iraqi Council of Representatives

USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program has developed a broad constituency of support in the Council of Representatives (COR). The LSP team of international and Iraqi experts has established strong relationships with the Presidency Council, the COR Secretariat's Secretary General and its directorates and advisers, COR staff, Members of Parliament (MPs), numerous committees, and political blocs. There is growing awareness of LSP in the COR and, despite the challenges presented by a year of significant political disruption to the business of the COR, LSP staff have earned the trust and confidence of many counterparts through their ongoing support for a smooth transition between the first and second Parliaments since the ratification of the new Constitution, and facilitating the development of a democratic, independent, and mission-driven Parliament.



ACHIEVEMENTS GROUPED BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Objective

1

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

LSP is building on the assistance provided to the COR in the first year of the Program 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.” Specifically, the Center will:

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

Since its launch in October 2008, LSP has steadily assisted COR counterparts on three fronts: establish the governance and institutional design of the ICPD; refurbish and prepare the physical building (the former Iraq National Council building) to house the Center; and, develop training and research programs for the Center.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP recruited and deployed an office design specialist who conducted a site assessment of the building and completed a comprehensive analysis and feasibility study for presentation to the COR, with recommendations for changes to the ICPD site to optimize its functionality.

LSP submitted to the COR a comprehensive list of required repairs to the building, and the COR took steps to engage local companies to undertake the renovations.

A procurement list of equipment to be provided by both the COR and LSP was prepared.

The ICPD’s administrative arrangements took another step forward when the COR formed a committee to review the current Rules of Procedure (ROP) in order to incorporate the ICPD into the COR’s institutional structure. LSP will continue to advise the committee on necessary changes to the ROP, and the recruitment of a Director General to head the ICPD and a Governing Board.

LSP drafted a report regarding inventory control at the ICPD. The report included recommendations for effective tracking of goods and prevention of fraud and waste.

In December 2010, LSP held the first ICPD Speakers Forum, “Laws and Regulations Governing Legislative Drafting.” Dr. Ali Abbas Mourad gave a presentation to committee advisors and other parliamentary staff covering techniques and rules of drafting. He discussed the role of the Iraq Constitution and the Supreme Court with regard to law-making, and covered the roles of the public, civil society organizations, and the media. As a basis for the discussion, he used the paper he drafted as an LSP Fellow entitled “Legislative Drafting.” The forum was very interactive, with participants asking questions and initiating discussions.



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development

A comprehensive analysis and feasibility study completed by an engineer and architect were submitted to and approved by the Secretary General (SG) of the COR. The study was undertaken to determine the viability of retrofitting and renovating the former National Council building, identified by the COR as the home for the Iraqi Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD).

Strengthened Staff Capacity and Political Will for Staff Reform

LSP staff work with the Secretariat and permanent staff to build capacity in the two areas of institutional reform and training, and to support initiatives to transfer information technology to the COR and to support MPs and parliamentary staff.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Change Management Initiative (CMI) is a reform process introduced to refocus the Secretariat on its core business of delivering effective services to MPs in an efficient manner. The findings of management reviews of pilot directorates, prepared by LSP staff, will form a basis for introducing structural reform, human resource (HR) management initiatives, and developing HR capacity. LSP's training activities include assessment of training needs, design of materials, and delivery and evaluation of training courses. Trainers include LSP staff and external Iraqi trainers and international experts.

A steering committee was established to guide the CMI and reform process.

LSP commissioned a series of studies on staff reform issues with recommendations for the new Parliament.

LSP launched the first phase of the CMI with a presentation of the CMI process to the COR's Secretary General and Directors General. LSP and the COR Secretariat agreed that the Administration, Parliamentary Affairs, Media, and Research Directorates would serve as the four pilot directorates for the CMI.

LSP delivered a comprehensive survey to staff members in pilot directorates. It provided insightful feedback regarding staff roles and responsibilities, challenges faced by the directorates, and internal perceptions of the structural reforms necessary to meet the demands of the COR.

Between October 2009 and September 2010, LSP provided 96 training courses for 1,151 participants (205 female and 946 male). These figures include 358 (61 female and 297 male) 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 LSP increasingly receives requests from staff and MPs for wide-ranging training.

LSP has provided the COR Training Department with forms and organizational tools to manage the process of registering and evaluating participants.

LSP continued to design new, and refine existing, training materials to best meet the needs of the COR. LSP worked with the COR Training Department to continue training COR staff. LSP offered a series of training courses, including Human Rights, Executive Branch Oversight, Media, and computer training.

LSP initiated a training needs analysis (TNA) for four COR Directorates: Administration and Training, Media, Research, and Parliamentary Affairs.

A complete listing of the training courses delivered during the first two years of the program is presented below.

Training Courses Provided by LSP in Years 1 and 2

Budgeting, Budget Oversight, Finance and Accounting

Analyzing and Preparing the Budget
 Analyzing Board of Supreme Audit Reports
 Analyzing the Investment Budget from an Economic Perspective
 Budget Best Practices
 Budget Preparation and Execution
 Budget Preparation in Iraq, USA and Elsewhere
 Congressional Budget Office Tasks and Reports
 Evaluating the Cost of Legislation
 The National Federal Budget
 Financial Analysis in Budget Execution
 Government of Iraq Budget Violations
 Government Accounting
 Government Budgeting
 Implementing the Capital Budget
 Insight to Budget Oversight
 Roundtable: Getting to Know Budgets and Oversight
 Measuring the Efficiency of Budget Performance
 Measuring the Efficiency of Federal Budget Execution
 Mid-Year Budget Review: Mid-Year Ministry of Interior Budget Review
 Operational Budget: Regarding Government Expenses
 Presenting Financial Information in Executive Reports
 Principles of the Government Accounting Cycle
 Review of Ministry of Education's Budget Training
 Seminar on International Accounting Standards
 Supreme Audit Institutions: What & Why?
 Impact of Important Changes on Budget Preparation

Parliamentary Staff Development

Media Assistance to the Finance Committee
 Assistance to the Finance Committee (Secretary)

General Topics

The Art of Negotiation
 Communication and Leadership Skills
 Communication Skills
 Conflict Management
 Crisis Management
 Developing Relationship between COR/Government and the Private Banking Sector
 Employee Rights and Duties
 Ethics and Transparency
 Event Planning Process
 Training Needs Analysis Focus Group Workshop
 Gross Domestic Product
 Human Resources Management
 Human Rights
 Internal Communication
 Investment Project Planning
 Leadership Skills
 Measuring Success versus Failure
 Writing Minutes
 Modern Management
 Preparation of Legislative Financial Newsletters: the 'News You Can Use' Newsletter
 Organizational Development
 Performance-Based Auditing
 Report Writing
 Reporting to Decision-makers
 Results of the Annual Financial Activity Training
 Results of Annual Financial Activity Rules for Implementing Ministry of Interior Contracts
 State Employees Discipline Law
 Strategic Planning
 Strategic Planning Retreat
 The Art and Craft of Interviews
 Time Management
 Training on Various Types of Contracts

Training Courses Provided by LSP in Years 1 and 2

Press and Media Relations

Journalism (Press) Training
 How to Cover a Public Hearing
 Media Relations
 How to Conduct a Press Conference
 TV Production Training
 Voter-Oriented Election Coverage

ICT and Office Automation

Basics of IT Networking
 Excel 2007 Basic & Intermediate
 Internet for Beginners
 PowerPoint (Basic)
 Special Training on Microsoft Office System
 Visual Basic 6.0 (Basic)
 Windows XP (Basic)
 Word 2007 Basic & Intermediate

Parliamentary Topics

The Role of Banks in Funding Small and Medium Enterprises
 Best Practices of Parliamentary Process
 Capacity Building for Provincial Office Staff

Parliamentary Topics

Code of Conduct (various COR staff)
 Code of Conduct for Parliamentary Staff in Provincial Offices
 Committee Operations
 Consultative Training Roundtable on the Legislative Drafting Process
 Council of Representatives Outreach
 Establishing a Vision
 Financial Management Law (FML)
 Comparison between the Financial Management Law and the Principles of the 1940 Accounting Law
 Fiscal and Monetary Policy
 Government Financial Statistics System
 How to Conduct a Public Hearing
 How to Host a Public Hearing
 Introduction to Comparative Parliamentary Systems
 Introduction to Dealing with Constituents
 Legislation Drafting Process: Current Practices
 Making Legislation Practical and Effective
 Parliamentary Oversight Training
 Parliamentary Process
 Program Management with the Ministry of Interior
 Fiscal Federalism Training
 Public Hearing Sessions and Legislative Reports
 Rules of Procedure



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

LSP made progress in the area of Information Technology (IT) with the delivery, installation, and configuration of a Microsoft SharePoint server that provides a framework for collaborative content management. The LSP team conducted a comprehensive Archive Survey Needs Assessment designed to capture the archiving needs of eight COR directorates. LSP also circulated the first draft of a feasibility study governing the Networked Constituency Case Management System (NCCMS) (related to the Constituent Complaint Resolution Lifecycle). The NCCMS systematizes the collection and analysis of, and response to, constituent concerns submitted to the COR's provincial offices (POs).



LSP deployed electronic information panels around the dining and conference areas of the COR. The information panels are using LSP-designed templates to present useful information in a rotating broadcast model. The panels provide information such as the day's meeting schedule in both Arabic and Kurdish. The information panel deployment has provided another opportunity for the COR to increase transparency.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

LSP established the Apprenticeship Program to provide the COR access to mid-level professionals who offer expertise on a short-term basis to accomplish urgent tasks. During this one-year period, apprentices were engaged in a number of projects on behalf of the Media Directorate. The first and highest profile of these was the production of informational films for the COR. Television segments entitled "Public Letter" and a short film entitled "A Day in the Life of a Member of Parliament" were created and produced with the direct assistance of three LSP apprentices. In total, the apprentices produced 26 television segments, a short documentary film, and a televised promotion for the Media Directorate.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Fellowship Program was launched to encourage experienced professionals -- usually academics -- to provide research to inform the important legislative work undertaken by the COR.

The Fellows' research helps to improve the quality of debate on key topics by offering studies, background notes, reports, and recommendations that are timely, comprehensive, non-partisan, and objective.

In this reporting period, six research papers were submitted to the Economic, Investment and Reconstruction Committee, the Committee on Youth and Sports, and the Members' Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee on the following topics:

- The Social Safety Law
- Unemployment and terrorism
- The impact of direct foreign investment in the economic development of Iraq
- Trespassing on state property
- The water supply problem in Iraq
- The open legislative process

Streamlined Parliamentary Process and Improved Committee Operations

LSP works with committee chairs, members, and staff to improve the legislative process and committee operations. 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 was defined and an information technology solution procured. The system is now being customized to meet the needs of the Iraqi COR.

LSP is providing guidance and technical assistance to the Research Directorate regarding amendments to the Rules of Procedure (ROP). LSP also provides advice and training on best practices in committee operations, such as improved quality, accuracy, and availability of committee agendas, draft laws, reports, and minutes.

LSP is assisting in the establishment of a Legislative Counsel's Office through the development of institutionalized managerial functions, administrative reporting procedures for the COR leadership, a drafting flow process and through the coordination of capacity building with external donors.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP assisted the Civil Society Committee and the Education Committee in hosting one public hearing each. These were the first two public hearings since the adoption of the new Constitution.

LSP has developed and refined the Orientation and Training Plan (OTP). The overall goal of the Plan is to provide timely and coordinated delivery of administrative, financial and procedural information, and services to MPs following the election. The OTP includes the following topics:

- Basic responsibilities of legislators
- The ROP
- The questioning of ministers
- The COR's legislative record

LSP assisted the Committee Affairs Department of the Parliamentary Affairs Directorate with the development of committee booklets to be distributed to newly-elected MPs. Each booklet explains the accomplishments of its committee.

LSP provided training on parliamentary procedures and support for adoption of improved bylaws in the new parliamentary session.



Civil Society Committee Hosts Iraqi Parliament’s First Public Hearing

The public shares opinions on the Unions and Associations Draft Law

Public participation is an important part of a successful democracy. It encourages transparency and accountability for government decisions and actions. A democratic government must act on the will of the people.

Iraq’s Council of Representatives is taking steps to advance democracy by increasing public participation. On November 17 2009, the COR’s Civil Society Committee hosted the Iraqi Parliament’s first public hearing. Nearly 50 people attended the event, which was held inside the COR, to listen to public opinions on the Committee’s upcoming draft legislation on unions and associations.



Representatives of public interest groups, the media, and members of various COR committees filled the room during the Iraqi parliament’s first open public hearing. The Civil Society Committee organized and hosted the hearing to gather public opinions on proposed new legislation

Representatives of a variety of unions and associations – including those representing artists, teachers, and engineers – discussed common challenges and concerns before the Committee. The State Minister for Civil Society Organizations, members of the media, and members of the Labor and Services and Cultural Committees also attended the event.

USAID’s Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program worked with the Civil Society Committee for six weeks to help prepare for the event. Committee members and staff participated in two days of LSP workshops on the importance of public hearings in a representative democracy and how to organize and conduct public hearings.

Given examples of public hearing notices, the committee created its own notice to inform the Iraqi public of the upcoming event. The notice was posted on the COR’s official website. LSP also trained independent journalists to cover public hearings at the COR appropriately.

The public hearing was a milestone in the advancement of the Iraqi Parliament. Most meetings concerning legislation take place without public notice and behind closed doors. With rare exception, Iraqi citizens, interest groups, and academic experts are not brought before parliamentary committees to share their opinions or expertise on pending legislation. The event was also remarkable in that security concerns were not used as an excuse to keep Iraqi citizens out of their Parliament. The public hearing took the new Iraqi democracy directly to its people.

“We are proud to be the first committee to conduct a public hearing in an organized manner, and to set an example to be followed by other committees.”

Civil Society Committee Chair

Strengthened Oversight and Budget Review Capacity

LSP helps the COR to review and analyze the national budget for the upcoming year and strengthens its capacity for oversight. 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. The process will be benchmarked to OECD standards.

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

LSP conducts training courses, roundtables, and seminars for the Budget Research Department (BRD) and committee staff in the COR. LSP is developing a series of workshops for newly-elected MPs utilizing best practices on oversight techniques. The Program is also developing MP Orientation materials and a curriculum on oversight and the budget cycle for the new Parliament.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the early part of 2010, LSP continued its development and expansion of multiple training programs designed to strengthen the BRD and the various committees it serves.

The positive reaction to outreach and training efforts was dramatic. During the middle of the year, in response to requests from various committees, numerous training courses, seminars, and workshops were expanded and roundtables involving several committees were initiated. LSP is increasing the committees' abilities to oversee the laws and to evaluate the fiscal impact of legislation by teaching cost estimation skills.

A newsletter, 'News You Can Use,' was developed and is being distributed. This newsletter provides information on fiscal activities and short articles on the budget process and transparency issues.

LSP developed "The Comparative Guide to Budget Offices" to identify the most efficient organizational structure for the BRD. Work also continued on "The Budget Analyst's Manual" and "The Budget Researcher's Manual."

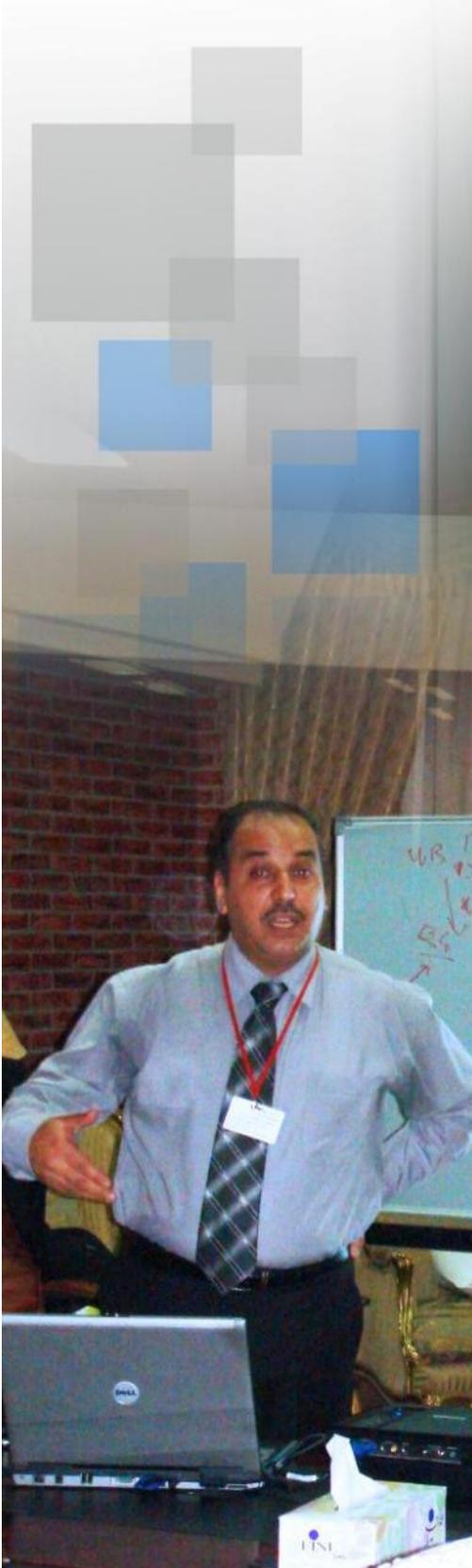


Budget and Oversight

Through successful cooperation with the Budget Research Department, LSP has enhanced the ability of MPs to ask more 'how and why' questions on budget issues.

LSP worked hard to enhance collaboration between the executive and Parliament without compromising the independence the Parliament needs to conduct energetic oversight. LSP's primary goal was to achieve acceptance of modern practices in performance-based evaluations of the government's activities and to establish several measurable criteria for vital projects in order to properly evaluate them. For these reasons, LSP actively involved the BRD in research on criteria. Additionally, LSP is working to ensure that the BRD can explain performance-based evaluation and the importance of evaluation criteria to committees. The Public Expenditures and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Framework, developed by the World Bank, was selected as the first step in providing visible indicators for success in public finance management.

LSP has provided MPs with major findings regarding the National Budget for fiscal year 2011. The impact of LSP's work was demonstrated by the increase in the number and quality of questions directed by MPs to the executive during the budget approval process.



Multimedia Workshop Gives COR Staff an “Insight to Oversight”

Sessions bring together staff of more than five committees

A critical role of any parliament is to ensure that public funds are well spent. In representing citizens, the parliamentarians must play an active role in ensuring that the government spends money as promised and that programs are delivered as efficiently as possible. *Parliamentary budget oversight holds the executive accountable for its use of public funds.*

The LSP Budget and Oversight Team provides technical assistance to the COR’s Budget Research Department and Finance Committee on issues related to budget analysis -- through seminars, workshops, and roundtable discussions.

To continue developing the budget oversight capacity of the COR, the Budget and Oversight Team led a five-day workshop in October 2009 called “*Insight to Oversight.*” As the second in a series of courses aimed at preparing competent financial observers at the COR, the workshop provided participants with a summary of international-standard oversight tools, international and Iraqi examples, and inquiry and investigation techniques.



Participants at LSP’s “Insight to Oversight” workshop learned about oversight techniques from around the world and watched videos of how they are used in various parliaments

Insight to Oversight was the first workshop to bring together staff of more than five committees. Thirty-six participants (the highest number of attendees for any oversight course) represented the Complaints, Finance, Accountability, Integrity, Education, and Martyrs Committees as well as the Public Relations Directorate.

It was also the first workshop in which LSP used videos to show how parliaments in other countries conduct parliamentary sessions, hearings and debates. The videos included examples from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

LSP trainers emphasized that oversight is not exclusively the responsibility of the Board of Supreme Audit, which focuses on money matters. They stressed the notion that oversight must be conducted by every directorate and should look at both the effectiveness and efficiency of government projects.

“I learned from this training about issues and things that I considered vague in the past. Now they are clear and beneficial not only to my work but also in my life.”

Workshop Participant, Finance Committee

USAID’s Legislative Strengthening Program Promotes Accountable and Transparent Budget Process

The Legislative Strengthening Program is facilitating networking between the Parliament and the executive

Creating accountability and transparency in government is vital to developing democracy in Iraq. USAID’s Legislative Strengthening Program is encouraging MPs, committee staff members, and researchers from the Budget Research Department of the Council of Representatives to conduct inquiries and broaden their range of discussions with various government entities on matters that affect the performance of the ministries or influence the national budget. As a result the COR is strengthening direct communication and creating informal relationships – both are valuable assets that are difficult to obtain during formal hearings.

Through regular networking events arranged by LSP, counterparts from the COR have gained exceptional insight into the Ministry of Interior’s budget planning and execution processes. One of the budget researchers, Ms. Sakar Kasab, is currently examining how the COR can apply a methodology similar to the Ministry of Interior’s to the COR’s own budget planning and execution.

Following a request from the BRD, LSP arranged a meeting between the Central Bank of Iraq, represented by Dr. Modher Mohammed Saleh, and representatives from both the Finance Committee and the Research Directorate. During this beneficial event, the representatives from the COR side learned about the Central Bank of Iraq’s monetary policy, policy on private- and state-owned banks, and the Iraqi debt.

As the COR attends more of these events, the value of site visits to ministries is becoming apparent. After the BRD discovered wide discrepancies in its analysis of the Ministry of Higher Education’s budget execution in 2008 versus 2009, it requested that LSP facilitate a meeting at the Ministry to study the matter. LSP is currently working to establish a relationship between the COR and this Ministry as well as many other government institutions.

“We hope that over the next couple of years, the COR and the Central Bank of Iraq will deepen the collaboration begun today. I would urge other governmental institutions to open their doors to the COR for more effective governance, as Iraq charts a path forward.”

Central Bank of Iraq representative,
Dr. Modher Mohammed Saleh



Major General Haleem, Deputy Assistant of Financial Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, discusses their budget planning methodology with the COR’s Budget Research Department staff

Legislators and COR staff are acquiring new skills through their interactions with the executive branch and are applying these skills to their efforts in scrutinizing the proposed national budget and in executing their oversight responsibilities.

The Parliament of Iraq Increases its Capacity for Fiscal Management

The “Competent Fiscal Management Observer Initiative” laid the groundwork for the Parliament to ensure that public funds are well spent

USAID’s Legislative Strengthening Program graduated its first class of the Competent Fiscal Management Observer initiative. This program was devised for the Council of Representatives to address four primary pillars supporting good governance: oversight, auditing, accounting, and budgeting. The four courses in the series encompass a basic, common body of knowledge for a certification of competence in fiscal management. Each module included toolkits and international best practices so that the concepts learned could be adapted for Iraq and put directly into action.

The course on oversight covered inquiry and investigation techniques and was unique in its use of technology by presenting recorded parliamentary hearings, sessions, and debates from the United States and other countries. These virtual visits enabled participants to see and hear, for the first time ever, the oversight processes and functions of other parliaments in action.

The auditing course built an excellent foundation in the expectations and approaches promulgated by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. The sessions presented information about the practical application of performance auditing, a concept relatively new to Iraq and highly important for the COR as new MPs take charge of their duties.



During the presentation “How to Study and Analyze the Board of Supreme Auditors Reports,” COR committee staff members studied and analyzed periodic reports submitted to the Ministry of Finance by the Government of Iraq’s spending units

The governmental accounting course included topics on cost assessment legislation and report writing. The course incorporated concepts from International Public Sector Accounting Standards, the International Monetary Fund’s Government Financial Statistics, and the United Nations System of National Accounts. The presentation of accounting systems from across the world provided extensive insight into what should be expected from the Iraqi Ministry of Finance as it reforms its practices and processes.

The course on governmental budgeting explained the purpose of budgeting, budget formulation, and budget execution. The course clarified how the budget can be used as a mechanism for development and improvement of opportunities for citizens.

Through the Competent Fiscal Management Observer Initiative, LSP provided the opportunity for graduates representing six COR committees to explore the roles, goals, and opportunities for committees to work together on the budget and on oversight processes. A number of issues were identified by MPs for consideration by committees.

Encouraged by the dedication of the new graduates, an enhanced program will be conducted to ensure that as many committees and MPs as possible can benefit from the program.

In-house Fiscal Management Experts Analyze Council of Representative's Own Budget

Budget Research Department takes initiative to become go-to source for financial analysis

The Iraq Council of Representatives prepares and approves its own operating budget each year. The budget is developed in the same manner as that promulgated by the Ministry of Finance for the national government. Compared to international standards in modern budget development, this current COR methodology lacks transparency and participation.

Recognizing this, the COR's Budget Research Department (BRD) took the initiative to analyze the COR's own budget. The BRD was established in 2008 to provide impartial and objective facts, figures, and commentary on budget planning and execution and to counsel members of parliament in fiscal management oversight. Analyzing the implications and potential impacts of numbers in a budget is a highly specialized activity. With training from USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program, BRD members are undertaking this role and becoming the fiscal management experts at the COR.

Using the skills and knowledge acquired by working closely with LSP, the BRD independently produced a report that includes the fundamental elements of good analysis: comparisons to prior-year data, examination of trends, and developments in spending patterns. BRD members distributed the report by hand throughout the COR, to MPs, staffers, and others. The department recently reorganized itself along committee lines. BRD members then discussed the analysis with the committees before MPs voted on the budget.

This was the department's second influential budget report. In November 2009, the BRD produced a 50-page comprehensive and impartial analysis of Iraq's FY2010 budget that was unprecedented within the COR.

In recent months, LSP members have served as the 'go-to' authority for COR committees and MPs seeking assistance with their budget research needs. The BRD is beginning to realize its mission of being the focal office that MPs naturally reach out to for analysis of all matters related to the government's fiscal management.

BRD work products are now being displayed prominently in the COR's recently renovated Research Library. A stand containing multiple copies of reports greets patrons as they enter the library. The materials are restocked regularly and new titles, such as the COR Budget Analysis, are added. The department is also active in distributing information by e-mail and is developing a page on the COR website, where all budget-related reports may be downloaded.



BRD reports are displayed prominently in the COR's renovated Research Library. The department also distributes information by e-mail and will soon make its reports available on the COR website.

"These reports will enhance the COR's capability of asking the ministries fact-based questions, hosting ministers, and hold public hearing sessions."

Iraqi Member of Parliament

Objective 5 Strengthened COR Outreach

LSP is increasing the capacity of staff in the COR's provincial offices so that they provide better representation services, constituency services, and civic education to Iraqis. The program is developing a staff handbook and training curriculum for provincial offices. LSP provides technical assistance to enable computer use and internet networking of the provincial offices to support their connection to the COR and enable an automated system of managing constituent casework. LSP is also helping the provincial offices in facilitating committee field hearings.

LSP is supporting the COR to better represent citizens and constituencies. In order to increase the transparency of the legislative process, the program is working with the Iraqi media and with civil society organizations. LSP is providing technical assistance, including a needs analysis, a feasibility study, and an equipment inventory in support of defining new innovative communication platforms that will increase outreach through such mediums as a COR television network and radio stations. Working primarily with the Media Directorate, LSP drafted a four-year communications plan that will help the COR to reach its constituents and other stakeholders.

ACHIEVEMENTS

LSP actively supported communications and outreach by developing the capacity of COR staff to utilize the media to communicate activities of the COR and its committees. Thirty-seven members of the COR Media Directorate and committee staff were provided training on the effective use of the media to better illustrate COR activities.

During an April 2010 conference in Erbil, training was provided to approximately 50 staff of the COR Provincial Offices. The training focused on a general introduction to media relations, with a focus on conducting press conferences. Provincial office staff will be serving as the in-field media relations assistants to MPs. As such, they will play a key role in MPs' constituent outreach.

In January 2010, LSP also worked to enhance the capacity of COR journalists by providing training regarding media coverage of a public hearing. Nineteen journalists participated in the course and were subsequently invited to attend a hearing of the COR Committee on Higher Education to apply their new skills.



LSP concluded a feasibility study that maps out the basic structure and equipment required to produce a new television satellite station for the COR. The COR satellite TV channel would have the capacity to produce and broadcast a wide variety of programs that the COR would otherwise have to rely on private satellite providers to air.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Support to Provincial Offices

In an effort to strengthen the capacity of COR provincial offices to collect and manage constituents' complaints and suggestions, LSP provided technical assistance, consultative sessions, and a feasibility study and designed and built a Networked Constituent Case Management System (NCCMS). The NCCMS intends to link the COR's 19 provincial offices with the Provincial Offices Department (POD), Parliamentary Affairs Directorate, COR committees, and, eventually, executive ministries.

LSP assisted the provincial offices in building a legal library by providing them with 700 legal books on 35 topics, ranging from the Iraqi Constitution to commerce, and labor and civil laws. LSP also raised the profile of the provincial offices among MPs by presenting to them the benefits of utilizing the COR provincial offices during LSP's Members Professional Development Program (MPDP). LSP led intensive consultative sessions and authored, in collaboration with the COR, a handbook for the provincial offices' staff. The handbook will enable provincial office staff to streamline work-flow processes and train new staff in a more efficient and effective manner.

A Communications Plan for the Council of Representatives

LSP worked with the Media Directorate in preparing a four-year communications plan that will help the COR conduct outreach to its constituents and other stakeholders.

The plan is intended to increase citizen access to information about COR activities, enhance public trust in the work of the government through greater transparency, enhance internal communication, and improve the capacity of the COR to communicate externally.

For example, a key message to be communicated is: "Iraq's Council of Representatives, the country's highest democratic institution, is an independent public institution comprised of elected officials and civil servants that represent the needs of the Iraqi people by enacting legislation and overseeing the government to produce real and tangible accomplishments."

Components of the plan include increasing the capacity of local independent media, improving the ability of COR committees to produce media documents, providing media relations and communications training to new MPs, through LSP's Members Professional Development Program and enhancing internal communication through LSP's Change Management Initiative.

While the Media Directorate will play a lead role in implementing the plan, other participants will include the Presidency Council, the Secretary General, MPs, other COR directorates and the COR provincial offices.



Education Committee Invites Public Input on Degree Accreditation

More than 120 attend the Council of Representative's second public hearing

The validity of university degrees has long been a concern in Iraq. Under the former regime, senior officials regularly received degrees without verifiable merit. During the chaos immediately following the fall of the regime, university records were compromised, and the lack of oversight allowed for the issuance of unwarranted degrees. More recently, investigations into corruption within universities and relevant ministries led to the discovery of 1,700 fake university degrees.

To address these concerns, the Education Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives held a public hearing on accreditation of Iraqi university degrees. The January 2, 2010 event aimed to foster discussion on the issue and encourage increased public participation in legislative matters.

The hearing was the second of its kind at the Iraqi Parliament. USAID's Iraq Legislative Strengthening Program was instrumental in assisting with the success of both events. Prior to the hearing, LSP worked extensively with the Education Committee to train members and staff on how to prepare for and conduct a public hearing. In addition to the formal workshops, LSP assisted committee members and staff to organize the event, including providing and reviewing with them an extensive preparatory checklist to ensure the event's success. LSP also assisted the committee chairman in writing his opening statement for the hearing.

Some 125 people attended the public hearing (compared with 20 at the first hearing), filling the room to its capacity. The large turnout can be attributed to the early notice posted on the COR website, which allowed enough time for the public to register to attend and for COR security staff to process the names of attendees. Committee staff kept the hearing running smoothly by discreetly directing late arrivals to free seats in the room as well as distributing and collecting prepared forms for attendees to enter statements for the record. The committee also provided an e-mail address for the submission of written statements from those unable to attend the event – a crucial step for a legislative committee soliciting public input on policy matters. The hearing was well orchestrated by the COR.

Attendees heard statements from Iraq's Minister of Higher Education, Deputy Minister for Scholarship, the Dean of the Islamic University, the Dean of Al-Nahin University, and representatives from Iraqi student associations. Throughout the hearing, Chairman Maki guided witnesses to focus on the set topic of the hearing, and managed the time allotted for each speaker. He skillfully facilitated the public hearing, showing great improvement on the part of the COR since the first public hearing.

Prior to this event, LSP had also trained independent journalists who cover the Parliament on how to report on public hearings. Unlike the first public hearing, which reporters did not attend, this hearing was attended by independent journalists who cover the Parliament.



The Iraqi Minister of Higher Education answers questions from the COR's Education Committee concerning the validity of foreign degrees earned by Iraqis

The Provincial Offices of the Council of Representatives Develop Models of Best Practices

Training serves provincial offices in supporting national legislators to better represent their constituents

As democracy further evolves in Iraq, the Council of Representative's provincial offices continue to play a crucial role in the representative and oversight functions of Parliament. These offices are the local face of Iraq's national legislature. As part of its commitment to build the capacity of the provincial offices, USAID's Legislative Strengthening Program conducted intensive training workshops in late April 2010 in Erbil for 48 Administrative and Regional Affairs staff of the provincial offices. The participants represented sixteen of Iraq's eighteen provinces including Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diwaniyah, Diyala, Erbil, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Sulaymaniyah, and Wasit.

Provincial offices' staff were trained on how to organize oversight field visits and public hearings to better support COR committees. In an interactive session, participants shared some of the obstacles they have faced and were able to benefit from successful approaches and solutions utilized by other provincial offices facing similar challenges. This approach enabled the provincial offices to begin compiling their own best practices.

In another Legislative Strengthening Program-led exercise, participants devised four concrete mechanisms to position them as a resource focal point for MPs and committees conducting oversight visits:

- Regularly attending local councils' sessions
- Building a database of local council and key government contacts in their provinces
- Building a database of government-funded projects in their provinces
- Collecting information on corruption in spending federal funds or lack of services in the provinces, and regularly issuing reports to the COR's Regional Affairs Committee

Participants committed to institute these mechanisms immediately upon return to their offices.

Training participants said the workshops were beneficial and relevant to their needs. Abdullah Hussein, COR Director of Provincial Offices, noted that the workshops raised the skill level of the Provincial Offices' Administrative and Regional Affairs Departments, and that he expects participants to immediately implement the best practices developed at the training sessions.

The training workshops are part of a series of broader specialized training effort targeting the four departments within the provincial offices: Regional Affairs, Member's Affairs, Management, and Complaints.

To date, the Legislative Strengthening Program has trained more than 160 provincial office staffers, covering all eighteen Iraqi provinces.



Ms. Jwan Hasan Mohammed, Administrative Specialist from the Sulaymaniyah Provincial Office is sharing best practices of her office with the group

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 will also assist the COR to develop a medium-term strategic development plan. Donors' programs are a resource that the COR will be able to leverage in setting and achieving its own goals. Better coordination of donor assistance, with a concerted plan adopted and directed by the COR, will hasten the COR's development through the provision of more effectively targeted representation, legislation, and oversight on behalf of citizens.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Donors are eager to provide support to the COR, but wish to avoid duplication of activities. Donors continue to meet in order to share information about their programs, to improve cooperation and ensure complementarity of their initiatives. Multiple donors stand ready to engage the new Parliament with support and assistance to ensure its success. LSP attended COR donor coordination meetings hosted by Alexious Butler, Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR). These meetings provided the opportunity for updates on political developments and on donor programs being implemented at the COR. In one meeting, a representative of the European Union (EU) provided a summary overview of its recent assessment of the COR. LSP took the opportunity to provide a briefing on its plans for the forthcoming Members Professional Development Program.

LSP and Ms. Butler held a meeting with the Speaker's advisor for donor coordination to present the LSP program, including work undertaken over recent months in the COR.

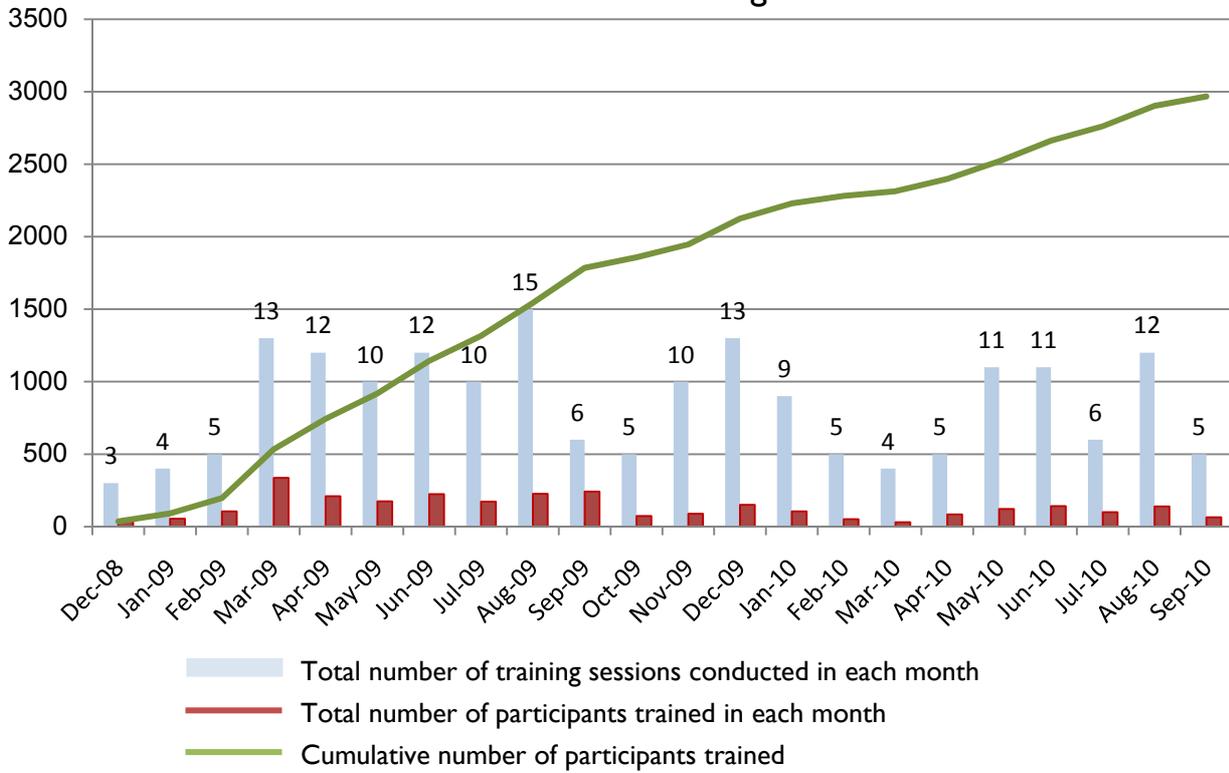
In the context of donor coordination, LSP produced a 'Links for Parliamentary Resources' online guide and Arabic and English versions were distributed to the COR's Media Directorate to be placed on the COR website.

LSP provided support to the Secretary General, upon his request, for his trip to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)/Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) that was held in Geneva, Switzerland on October 16-22, 2009. As the agenda included a focus on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of parliamentary performance, LSP provided the Secretary General with speaking notes on M&E and a briefing note highlighting LSP's achievements in the COR.



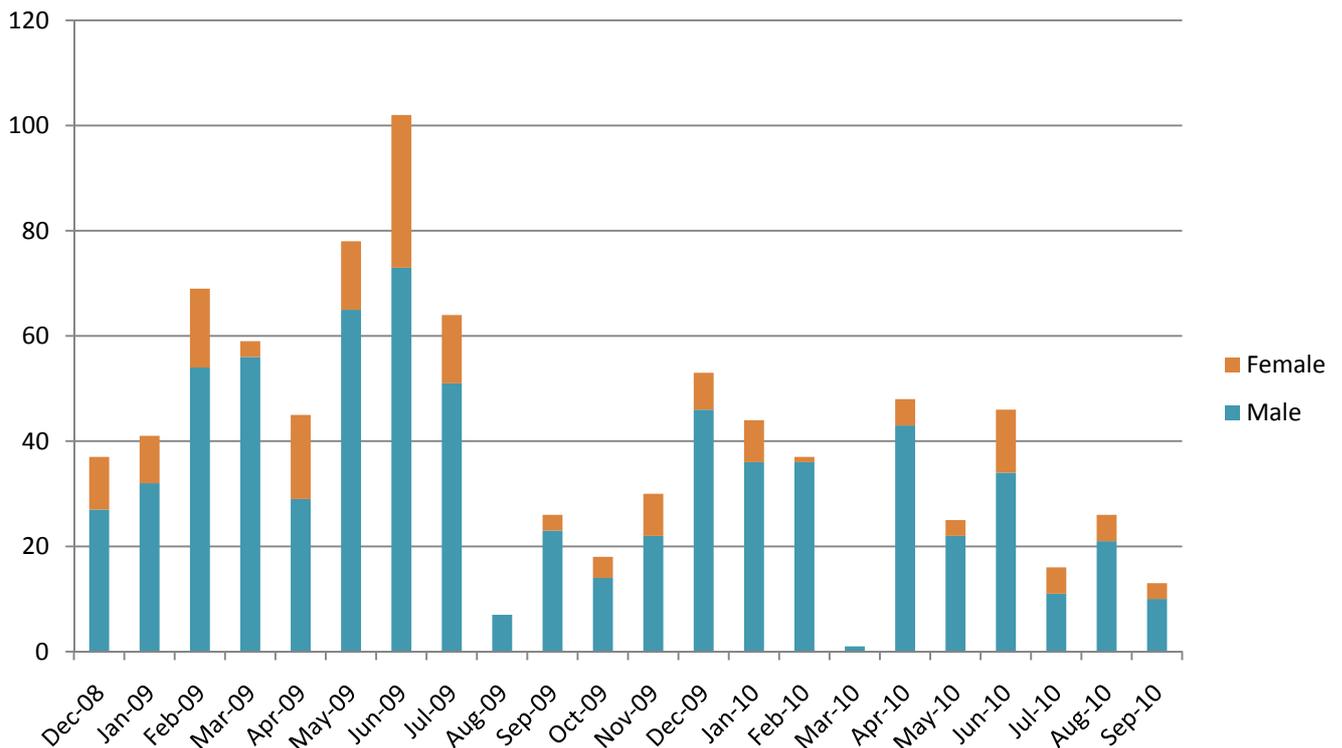
LSP TRAINING STATISTICS

LSP Two-Year Training Statistics



Male/Female Participation in Training Events

Number of 'unique' trainees disaggregated by gender



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT TIMELINE



OCT - DEC 2009

JAN - MARCH 2010

APRIL - JUNE 2010

JULY - SEP 2010

This period presented an important test of Iraq's democracy. The COR's Civil Society Committee hosted the Iraqi Parliament's first open public hearing, thus advancing democracy by increasing public participation. A variety of representatives of Iraqi society discussed common challenges and concerns regarding the draft legislation on unions and associations. The event was also remarkable in that Iraqi citizens were not kept out of their Parliament, as has been the case in the past due to security concerns. The public hearing was a milestone in the advancement of the Iraqi Parliament.

LSP continues to offer technical support to assist in the development of the ICPD. And LSP launched the first phase of the Change Management Initiative with a presentation of the initiative to the COR's Secretary General and Directors General. LSP delivered a comprehensive survey to the directorate staff which provided insightful feedback regarding staff roles and responsibilities, and challenges faced by the directorates.

LSP completed work on a Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Budget Execution Report. This report contains an analysis of the 32 spending units representing 95% of the GOI expenditures. It compares their spending for FY2009 against the budget for the same year. In addition to this variance analysis, it evaluates the impact that these spending patterns could have on the FY2010 budget.

OCT - DEC 2009

JAN - MARCH 2010

APRIL - JUNE 2010

JULY - SEP 2010

Through LSP's Iraqi Professors Educating Parliament (IPEP) initiative, the COR's network of contacts grew exponentially, and prominent Iraqi speakers provided needed information and expertise to the Parliament.

LSP finalized the "Communications Strategy for the Media Directorate of the Iraq Council of Representatives" to increase involvement and participation among stakeholders.

In March, LSP completed the final stage of the CMI "functional review." The information gathered was used to create a report on structural changes needed by the Administration Directorate, with particular emphasis on revising and restructuring the Human Resources Department. LSP also successfully completed a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of the COR staff and an integrated training plan to support the COR's staff requirements in the context of the organizational transformation process inherent in the CMI.

LSP delivered a "Journalism Training Curriculum" to assist journalists who report on Parliament in developing their skills.



USAID
من الشعب الأمريكي

LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM
برنامج دعم وتطوير البرلمان البرلماني التشكوري اوبه ربه ببدان بهزلهمان

LSP launched the “Governmental Budgeting – Why and How” seminar. The three-day seminar covered a range of topics from budget formulation to budget execution. The seminar was attended by staff members from the following committees:

- Economic, Investment and Reconstruction
- Education
- Finance
- Health and Environment
- Labor and Services
- Martyrs, Victims, and Political Prisoners
- Regions and Governorates.

Discussions were very active, and a number of issues were identified by MPs for discussion after the formation of committees in the new Parliament.

LSP continued assisting Baghdad University professors in developing COR-related seminars and workshops, in an effort to improve the capacity of the COR and improve its developing connection with the Iraqi academic community. LSP conducted seven events during this period under IPEP. Ten of the twenty-four standing committees had attendees at IPEP events. The abilities of the COR committees to conduct oversight has grown through their participation in this initiative.

LSP continued training for provincial offices so that they can better support national legislators in representing their constituents and conducting oversight. Sixteen of Iraq’s eighteen provinces were represented at the training sessions offered during this quarter. During the training, participants devised concrete mechanisms to better connect the COR to provincial councils. Participants committed to institute these mechanisms immediately upon return to their offices.

In September, LSP began to train committee press secretaries to improve committee transparency.

LSP organized an IPEP event entitled “Employee Rights and Duties” presented by Mr. Adnan Abdul-Aziz Ammen, the Legal and Financial Advisor to the Speaker of the COR. This event was attended by six staff members of the Finance and Martyrs, Victims, and Political Prisoners Committees; the Legal Directorate; and the Human Resources Department of the Administration Directorate. The seminar discussed processes and procedures for employee assessments, compensation plans, assignment, and seconding of employees.

LSP continued to facilitate a series of training courses, roundtables, and seminars for the Budget Research Department (BRD) and committee staff in the COR. Sessions this quarter focused on governmental accounting and parliamentary oversight, as well as improving dialogue between the COR and the executive branch. LSP also made elevating the skills for the BRD a priority by seeking out additional training from the House Democracy Partnership and by exploring a partnering relationship with the budget unit within the Jordanian Parliament.

LSP held an "Explanation of the Law on Discipline of Governmental Employees" seminar. Six participants representing the Defense and Security; Education; Finance; and Regions and Governorates Affairs Committees participated in the event. Attendees were provided with specifics on the rights and responsibilities mandated by existing Iraqi law concerning performance expectations of civil servants.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Knowledge of the COR's evolving needs, challenges and priorities, combined with lessons learned by LSP over the first two years of the project has enabled the LSP team to propose some new initiatives in its work for the third year of program.

- LSP will provide support for management of the ICPD on workshop and seminars to train the Center's governing board and staff. In collaboration with the COR Human Resource (HR) Department and the ICPD, LSP will develop a set of manuals to ensure sustainability of core skills training modules, a staff handbook and internal guidelines and procedures for ICPD staff (including guidelines for hiring). LSP will support ICPD development and outreach capacity by designing an ICPD webpage for the COR website.
- LSP will roll out the CMI, commencing with a major strategic planning retreat for the COR's senior management team. LSP will assist in the development of a Senior Counterparts Program (SCP) which will match COR leaders with their counterparts in other parliaments as a means of sharing experiences and exchanging best practices.
- LSP will develop MP skills during the months ahead as LSP rolls out the three phases of the Members Professional Development Program (MPDP).
- LSP will collaborate with the Parliament to advance the creation of an independent budget office to improve budget debate and analysis.
- As the provincial outreach offices develop, LSP will continue to provide technical assistance in management, communications, organization, and limited logistics to COR Provincial Office staff.
- LSP will continue to implement the HR Strategy with the HR Department and across the COR.
- LSP will continue to build capacity by conducting training cycles for the COR directorates and committee staff.
- LSP will continue to build capacity of the COR IT Directorate with hardware, software and advanced and technical training, expanding COR automated capacities to include committee agendas, minutes, and reports. LSP will also install the equipment and the software of the Legistar (Legislative Bill Tracking System) at the COR.
- LSP will support the Media Directorate in monitoring the implementation of the "Communications Plan 2010-2014." LSP also will continue to provide support and counsel to the Media Directorate, COR Civil Society Organization Committee and other COR entities.



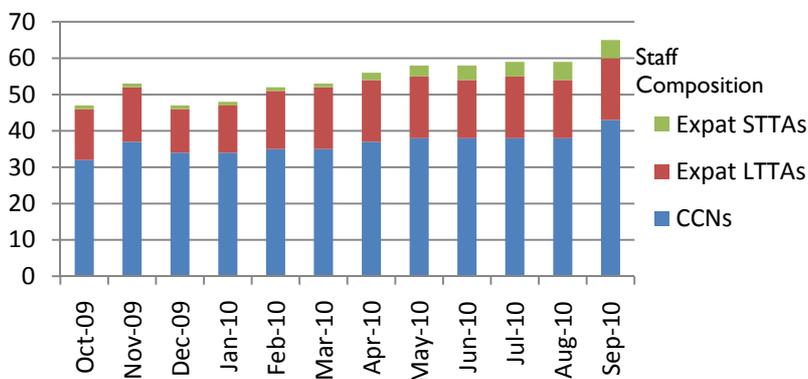
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT



PERSONNEL

LSP’s long- and short-term expatriate staff brings international best practices in parliamentary development to the program. They work hand-in-hand with the Iraqi staff who provide critical knowledge about their politics, history, and institutions to the program. Working together, the team is able to recommend the best possible solutions. LSP’s team is led by the Chief of Party (COP) and is a uniquely-formed international team of long- and short-term technical specialists in legislative strengthening and management.

LSP is committed to providing Iraqi staff members with opportunities to develop professionally and to play increasingly active roles in program implementation. Several local LSP staff hold management positions on the team. Training is delivered primarily by Iraqis. This approach ensures that global best practices 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 has deployed the program website [www.iraqlsp.com] that is now available to the public.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation in post-conflict settings presents a number of institutional and cultural challenges. 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 USAID/LSP. Currently, the program’s results framework includes 21 Performance Indicators and 2 USG/Agency Level Indicators.