



USAID | **IRAQ**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Legislative Strengthening Program

CASE STUDY OF ICPD ESTABLISHMENT

March 2011

Contract No. 263-I-03-06-00015-00 (REDI Task Order No. 3)

March 27, 2011

This document was produced for review by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by AECOM. The authors' views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Legislative Strengthening Program

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

REDI Task Order No. 3

USAID/Iraq SO10: Capacity of National Government Institutions Improved

Program Area: Good Governance

Program Element: GJD 2.1- Legislative Function and Process

CASE STUDY OF ICPD ESTABLISHMENT

March 2011

Submitted by:

AECOM

2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700

Arlington, VA 22201, USA

T: +1.703.528.7444

www.aecom.com

In association with:

Management Systems International

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

Case Study of ICPD Establishment

Challenges in Establishing the Iraq Center for Parliamentary Development

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.

One of LSP's initiatives is the Iraq Center for Parliamentary Development (ICPD). The concept of such a Center is to offer a sustainable body to help enhance parliamentary democracy, and develop the professional capacity of the COR. The ICPD will be a facility that provides a variety of training for Members of Parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff through seminars and workshops. The ICPD will also facilitate the COR's representation at international parliamentary bodies.

Establishing the ICPD has been a process weighed down with significant challenges. Many can be addressed through creative initiatives within the institution itself, while others will require political commitment to, and collaborative action by, the COR leadership and relevant stakeholders.

The Concept of the ICPD

The idea of a parliamentary development centre was conceptualized by the former Speaker, Mahmud Al Mashhadani, in 2008. He envisioned that such a center would strengthen democratic institution building, and generate awareness about parliamentary functions and good governance. LSP initially provided a research document outlining a variety of similar institutional models along with a list of services and activities they delivered. The former Speaker authorized the Members Affairs and Parliamentary Development Committee (MAPDC) of the COR to initiate the process of establishing the Iraq Centre for Parliamentary Development (ICPD) in cooperation with LSP. Initially, the COR used two names for the Center interchangeably. The Center was referred to as the Iraqi Council of Representatives Parliamentary Development Center, and also the Iraq Center for Parliamentary Development. Eventually, by mid 2009, the COR began referring to the Center consistently as the ICPD.

Process

In January 2009, after the MAPDC and LSP began discussions aimed to create the ICPD, the MAPDC chairperson established an interim governing board for the Center. The board consisted of three MPs, the Director General (DG) of the Research and Studies Directorate, the DG of the Parliamentary Affairs Directorate, and the COR Research & Studies Advisor. The board was set up to address all issues concerning the establishment of the ICPD, including the physical space for the facility and the Center's governance framework.

LSP immediately began conducting meetings with the interim board with the goal of making progress on the Center's establishment. LSP was immediately faced with a challenge when interim board members were frequently absent for these meetings, and later objected to decisions made in their absence.

Eventually a building was identified as the future home of the ICPD.. In February 2009, LSP deployed an architect to conduct a site assessment and facility audit of this location. The site and building were inspected, and deficiencies and necessary improvements were identified. The architect submitted a report that included recommendations for a design that would meet the operational requirements of the ICPD as they were envisioned at the time. . After reviewing this report, the COR eventually determined that the building did not meet required standards, and was not suitable for the ICPD due to its size, age and design.

The structure of the ICPD was discussed with those members of the interim board that actively participated in meetings with LSP. A draft structure for the Center was approved by the board in June 2009, and job descriptions for a wide range of positions were prepared by LSP by August 2009. It was determined at the time that the ICPD was to be an independent center that was associated with the COR, much like similar centers in Thailand and Bangladesh.

It was agreed that the ICPD and the Research Directorate in the COR would have separate yet complimentary roles. The ICPD would undertake strategic and comprehensive research, and the Research Directorate would focus on operational and time sensitive research, primarily for MPs.

Serious challenges arose when strong differences between the members of the interim board began to surface and became prominent by September 2009. The board began to disagree on the ICPD's governance, structure, and mandate. Previously agreed upon initiatives were revisited and decisions were reversed.

The DG of the Research Directorate, Dr. Mayada, continuously raised concerns about perceived duplication of research efforts by the ICPD. On a number of occasions, LSP clarified with Dr Mayada and the Secretary General (SecGen) of the COR the difference between the analytical and strategic research to be undertaken by the ICPD, and the operational and time sensitive research to be done by the Research Directorate, but to no avail.

By mid 2009, Mahmud Al Mashhadani had been removed as Speaker and was replaced by Ayad Al Sammerai. At this time, LSP received a written confirmation from the new Speaker that reiterated his office's commitment to the ICPD. The letter specified that cooperation would continue between the COR and LSP on the establishment of the Center. As the new government started operating, there were gradual shifts in power that resulted in many decisions about the ICPD being revisited and modified. New instructions were given by the Speaker to share all discussions and refer all decisions with regard to the ICPD to the SecGen, instead of the MAPDC. It was also determined through a series of discussions that the structure of the ICPD would be modified and significantly expanded, and the Center would become a COR Directorate.

The internal politics of the COR, disagreement within the interim board members with regard to the ICPD's structure and mandate, along with the objections of the DG of the Research Directorate, created implementation challenges for LSP for the remainder of 2009, and well into 2010. At the end of 2009, the COR was fully distracted by events in the lead up to the March 2010 elections, and throughout 2010 were focused solely on the composition of a new parliament. At this point, and for these reasons, progress on the ICPD effectively stalled.

In order to move forward on the creation of the Directorate, LSP adjusted its strategy and engaged the Presidency Council (PC) of the COR on ICPD planning. The PC designated the SecGen to take charge of all issues related to the ICPD.

Due to the SecGen's new responsibility to oversee the creation of the ICPD as a Directorate, many issues that were previously decided were revisited. The internal structure of the proposed directorate was modified based on suggestions from the SecGen and the COR's Research and Studies Advisor who actively encouraged further adjustments to the structure, based on input from the Ministry of Planning. LSP expressed concern over the functionality of the new structure and suggested a more compact version. Notwithstanding LSP's apprehension, the functions of all of the departments and sections were also revisited.

Due in part to the complications surrounding the formation of a government following the elections of March 2009, obtaining formal written approvals regarding ICPD issues were delayed. A Director General was not identified, and the governing board has not officially been approved, nor has the internal structure of the ICPD Directorate. These issues remain with the Presidency Council, and as of March 2011 have not been decided.

However, with the Parliamentary elections of 2010 also came a new COR Speaker, Osama al Nujaiifi. In January of 2011, LSP joined USAID for the Speaker's first formal briefing on programming. The Speaker embraced the idea of the ICPD as a whole, and was encouraging about LSP's ongoing role in the Center's creation. He expressed his support of the establishment of the ICPD, and commended the future role the ICPD has in the development of COR staff and MPs. LSP welcomes the arrival of the new Speaker, and is encouraged by his commitment to seeing the creation of the ICPD through.

After the PC designated the SecGen as LSP's point person on ICPD, LSP urged the SecGen to work on identifying a suitable building for the ICPD's location. Eventually, the former National Council building was allocated. At LSP's urging, the Steering Committee and SecGen agreed to allocate the entire building for use by the ICPD, rather than the originally considered first floor and auditorium only.

A series of site visits were conducted by LSP and COR representatives to inspect the ICPD site and make an assessment of the building. An Office Planning and Design Specialist was hired by LSP to file a report on the structure of the building, necessary renovations, IT requirements, and recommended furnishings and room set up. The report included detailed information for a recommended floor plan complete with room dimensions and an estimate of the cost of improving and equipping the Center.

LSP facilitated a presentation that was given by the Office Planning and Design Specialist based on his report to the SecGen, COR Economic Advisor, and Director General of the Research Directorate. The presentation outlined recommendations for the use of the building, and included options for the design of the lecture halls, training rooms and mock spaces.

LSP also worked closely in parallel with the IT Directorate to develop an effective IT strategy for the ICPD. LSP worked with the COR on developing necessary network infrastructure to accommodate state of the art access to the internet and the COR network from all training facilities within the ICPD. In addition, LSP developed a comprehensive architectural design for this network infrastructure as well as any necessary VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) communication link necessary between the ICPD and the COR. LSP also has consulted with the IT Directorate to define the necessary equipment needed to support the various training facilities within the ICPD.

After a long tendering procedure and administrative approvals process, renovations to the building are nearly complete. Several issues remain surrounding security, including the procurement and installation of security cameras, the creation of a security team to run the cameras, and the completion of a road that will aid safe passage for MPs from the COR to the ICPD Directorate. It is expected that the tender process and recruitment of a security company to conduct the work necessary will take several months. Once the company has been contracted to do the work, a further two months are estimated for completion of the work. A timeline for the completion of the road has not been established.

It is estimated that the physical space for the ICPD will not be ready for use until a minimum of three months has passed. There is currently no estimate on when the Presidency Council will turn to issues related to the ICPD, and confirm the final governing board and the structure.

Despite continued challenges, LSP remains committed to assisting the COR in creating the ICPD, and continues working in partnership to make the Directorate a reality.