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Iraq Governance Strengthening Project

Action plan for Strengthening and Consolidating the OSTP Excellence Network (EN).

May 2013



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FUNDED BY USAID

May 2013

Contract No. AID-267-C-11-00006

Deliverable No.D-2014-234

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Contract No.: AID-267-C-11-00006

Contractor Name: Chemonics International, Inc.

USAID Cognizant Technical Office: Democracy and Governance Office
USAID Iraq

Date of Report: *May 2013*

Document Title: *Action plan for Strengthening and Consolidating the OSTP Excellence Network (EN).
FINAL*

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*Action plan for Strengthening and Consolidating the OSTP Excellence Network (EN).
Final
May 2013*

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Executive Summary: This document is an action plan for Strengthening and Consolidating the OSTP Excellence Network (EN). It lays out the purpose, oversight, membership, and other aspects of the EN. It also recommends the main features of EN implementation, who should lead each, and when they should start. It also touches on the resources required to support successful implementation, though more work is required to fully determine resource needs. The report was completed by Organizational Development Specialist Andrew Kaiser from May 6 – 16, 2013.

Background: Seven provinces are currently implementing the Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Program (OSTP) in Iraq, led by OSTP teams. These teams are implementing or about to implement ‘solutions’ (i.e reforms) to improve citizen services in their respective provinces. They are entering phases four and five of the OSTP cycle, which are implemented simultaneously.

All of the provincial OSTP teams have expressed a strong interest in more actively sharing their lessons-learned with OSTP teams from other provinces, and learning from other OSTP teams. An EN inaugural conference in January 2013 confirmed this interest. This action plan draws from the parameters set from that conference, documented in the ‘*OSTP Practitioners’ Community EN– Strengthening OSTP Through an Iraq-wide OSTP Sharing of Knowledge and Experience*’ report by Dr. Kevin Wheeler.

Purpose

The purpose of the EN is to support this transfer and application of reform best-practices across provinces, and in doing so to hasten the improvement *of* citizen-services.

Governance and Oversight

OSTP teams expressed a desire for the Ministry of Planning (MoP) to house the EN as a function of the Iraq Center of Excellence for Government (ICEG). However, as ICEG is yet to be created, we recommend the creation of a Provincial OSTP Coordinating Committee (POCC). POCC would consist of one individual from each provincial OSTP team that has completed the self-assessment phase. Once the ICEG is created, POCC would remain as a coordinating committee (CC), representing all provincial OSTP teams that have completed the self-assessment with the ICEG

The following are proposed responsibilities of the POCC:

- Coordinate EN activities
- Set the overarching EN priorities and focal areas

- Identify shared enabling environment constraints among multiple regions
- Represent OSTP teams with the Ministry of Planning (MoP) and Minister of Provincial Affairs
- Identify top lessons-learned, successes, and set-backs to share with other regions; support the capture and packaging of these lessons for use in EN activities.
- Oversee quality control of best-practices and lessons learned.
- Determine and enforce EN membership policies.

Membership

Membership in the EN will be limited to past, present, and future OSTP members at the provincial level who have participated in OSTP for at least six months and who have completed a self-assessment. While EN membership is limited to OSTP implementers, the EN is encouraged to invite non-members to participate in relevant activities and events on a per-event basis.

Leadership and Management

Each quarter one of the provinces will chair the EN. This will support the transfer of OSTP ownership from Taqadam to the provinces, and will bolster sustainability. Duties of the Chairing province will include:

- Selecting the focal theme(s) for the quarter
- Hosting EN activities and events
- Highlighting successes and lessons-learned specific to the region
- Contributing to and editing EN publications
- Coordinating EN activities and events

This role will rotate each quarter among provincial OSTP member organizations. Taqadam will work hand-in-hand with the Chairing province so that they learn how to lead the EN. Once the POCC is created it should determine the specific order of rotation of EN chairmanship. As they have expressed an interest, Babil and (check) Ninewa may wish to serve as chair for the first and second quarter, respectively.

Themes

Each quarter the EN will focus on one theme. The objective for each quarter will be to achieve a specific (and ideally very tangible) goal for this theme, ideally by the end of the quarter. The provincial Chair for the quarter will choose the theme - one that is of particular priority to them. The POCC will approve it.

The following are illustrative themes (with a goal for their completion in parenthesis):

- *Improved provincial procurement* (Approved procurement systems; \$100 million in procurements completed within three months of the subsequent quarter.)
- *Resolve and unify Law 21 interpretation* (major law 21 questions asked and answered by the State Minister of Provincial Affairs)
- *Create new self-assessment criteria for a provincial government function* (e.g. sewage removal) (goal: criteria created, approved by POCC, and implemented by 3+ provinces)

- *Integrating findings into transformation action plans (2+ success stories on action plan updating documented; round-table to discuss/disseminate best practices held.)*

Channels for Knowledge Sharing

Establishing and delivering a regular cadence of high-quality activities, events, and acknowledgements is the recipe for the success of any EN. The primary means (channels) for EN communication and dialogue with members will be those with which members already use and are most comfortable. We will establish ‘push’ and ‘pull’ content delivery systems. We recommend the following initial features for the EN. For each feature we also propose frequency and management responsibility.

Continuous Learning

EN Management will regularly identify and distribute additional opportunities for learning. This will include articles and worksheets on government best-practices, such as examples of what other countries are doing to improve citizen services. It will also include management and change management tools, best-practices, and information resources. By regularly distributing such material to EN members we create an opportunity for EN members to continuously learn and improve their skills.

Capturing and Sharing Successes and Best-Practices

We will capture the reform tools, templates, success-stories, member profiles, manuals, video-interviews and other content and successes driven by EN members in their respective provinces. We will package these in user-friendly formats and distribute them through the above-mentioned channels. EN activities will support provinces responsible for the successes to share them with other provinces, and support them to transfer the practices across provinces. Through this means we will simultaneously create a repository of Iraq provincial government best-practices that can be used by all provinces, and *recognize* the individuals, teams, and provinces responsible. Such recognition is a strong incentive for additional improvement.

Media Engagement

We will work with the media to publicize reform successes, particularly those that tangibly improve citizen services. We will also work with OSTP teams to publicize their reform goals so that citizens are aware of government improvement efforts and can help keep them accountable.

EN Features and Actions Plan (with timeline and responsibilities)

Implementation will have two phases, with steps below.

Feature	Description	Frequency	Responsibility	When to start to implement
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Provincial OSTP Coordinating Committee (POCC)	Coordinating body consisting of one member of each OSTP having completed the self-assessment	Monthly (meeting or phone call)	Wameedh Al Taie with Amy and Alia	June
OSTP Chair rotation	Each quarter management of the EN will be led by one province, on a rotating basis	Quarterly	Wameedh Al Taie	June (rotation determined during 1 st POCC meeting)
Website	The EN website will be a clearinghouse for OSTP tools, approaches, case-studies, success stories, member-profiles, etc. It will also enable member-to-member communication and knowledge sharing.	2 x week update	Kaizen IT department with support from Taqadum	June
Facebook	Most OSTP members already have Facebook accounts. We will thus create an EN Facebook account and regularly post information, poll members, highlight successes, etc.	Daily update	Shahad Nawzad with Kaizen support	May
e-newsletter	A twice-quarterly e-newsletter will inform members of upcoming events, opportunities, and successes. Each newsletter will highlight one province.	Monthly edition	Wameedh Al Taie	Already
List-serve e-mail groups	We will create e-mail groups linking 1) team members for like criteria across provinces, 2) sponsors, 3) POSC members, and 4) regions, and use these e-mails as appropriate to discuss 'hot-topics' and promote dialogue.	As needed	Kaizen IT department with support from Taqadum	June
Conferences	We will hold an OSTP community-wide conference each year to recognize progress and the individuals and teams responsible. In this conference EN members will identify and address inhibitors to reform, and choose main themes for the coming year	Annual	Wameedh Al Taie	Jan-2014
Workshops and Forums	Regular workshops will bring together EN members from shared regions, criteria, and solutions, and provide technical support for them to identify and address shared opportunities and constraints. THESE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY OF ENs!	10 x per quarter – with active support from Taqadum technical personnel	Wameedh and Ahmed	June

National center*	We will establish an Iraq Center of Excellence for Government (ICE-G). This organization will hold an annual awards competition for public sector organizations. It will also serve a center for convening EN activities, capturing best-practices, and promoting government excellence	Annual award; regular activities 1 x per year	Activity led by Tarabat; Wameedh Al Taie to serve as Taqadum liaison	TBD
Content capture and leveraging	We will create ‘continuous learning’ short videos of OSTP members and their teams highlighting their experiences. We will convert new manuals, templates, and other resources created by one province into templates for other provinces to use. We will identify and distribute short articles and lessons on management, government, and change from international sources. We will create case studies of successes for sharing. We will take pictures of events and distribute them	6 x per month minimum on average	Shahad Nawzad (with Kaizen support)	
Media engagement	We will work with the media to publicize reform successes, particularly those that tangibly improve citizen services. Where possible we will also publicize OSTP reform goals, so that citizens are aware of government improvement efforts and can help keep them accountable.	4 x per month at a minimum	Wameedh Al Taie	June will do it with internationals and nationals Media Outlet

Resources

The EN will require significant support, particularly at its onset, from the Taqadum OSTP team. This will establish the systems and mechanisms for completing the above activities. Taqadum’s technical and regional personnel, as part of integration, should also support the identification and capture of successes to transfer to other provinces through the EN.

The provincial chair should also support ongoing EN leadership and upkeep on a quarterly basis.

Additional Kaizen personnel should also play targeted roles. Kaizen’s information technology (IT) manager should be utilized to establish the EN website and e-mail groups, and link these to the Facebook page. Kaizen assistance will be critical to coach the Taqadum OSTP technical team on content capture and leveraging, and the inauguration of EN workshops and forums.