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USAID/IRAQ GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING PROJECT (GSP/TAQADUM)

Comprehensive Report

JULY 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Chemonics International Inc.



GSPTTAQADUM

An important part of Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) activities was improved delivery of solid waste and garbage pick-up services that included clean-ups such as this one in the Al-Hussain neighborhood in Muthana.

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

This Comprehensive Report covers the period of September 29, 2011 to June 30, 2014

Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development/Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq

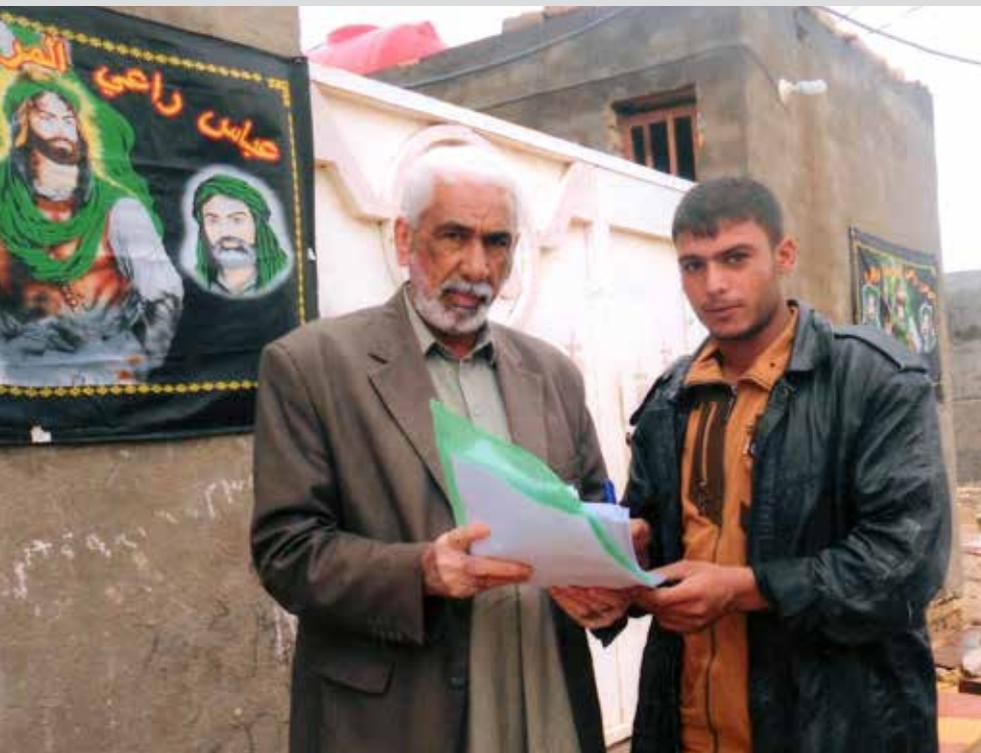
FRONT COVER: These residents were pleased after the Babil Water Directorate installed a potable water network of 650 meters in March 2013 for houses in the Al Askary Dhubat Al Ola area after a Babil ESDO field visit.

GSP/TAQADUM

BACK COVER: A consultant to the Prime Minister on women's affairs at the GSP/Taqadum National Conference on Developing Local Legislation to Stop Violence against Women.

GSP/TAQADUM

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



GSPTAQADUM

A resident talks with an ESDO team member during a rapid scan in the Mukhtar- Al-Hakeem neighborhood in the Summer Sub-District of Diwaniya in January 2014. ESDO teams conducted 125 rapid scans throughout GSP/Taqadum implementation.

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GSPTAQADUM

Municipalities of Babil distributed trash receptacles to upgrade trash collection coverage based on ESDO recommendations in July 2013.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COMSEC	Council of Ministers Secretariat
CSD	Citizen Service Desk
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Citizen Satisfaction Survey
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DI	Development Iraq
ESDO	Essential Service Delivery Oversight
FIDIC	International Federation of Consulting Engineers
GO	Governor's office
GOI	Government of Iraq
HCCP	Higher Commission for Coordination among the Provinces
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
ITRS	Issue Tracking and Reporting System
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LOC	Letter of credit
M&O	Monitoring and Oversight
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOSGA	Ministry of State for Governorates Affairs
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OSTP	Organizational Self-assessment and Transformation Program
PC	Provincial council
PHCP	Primary Health Care Project
PMO	Project management office
PPD	Proposed provincial development
PPDC	Provincial Planning and Development Council
PPL	Project priority list
PRCS	Project results cost sharing
SDPS	Service Delivery Performance Standards
SLIT	Sub-legislative Implementation Tracking system
SP	Strategic plan
TSI	Technical Support to Iraq program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



GSPTAQADUM

The Second Deputy Governor and ESDO Chair of Wasit on their first site visit to the Al-Kut District's Al-Kareemai neighborhood in March 2013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GSP/TAQADUM IN BRIEF

- 33-months of implementing activities (September 2011 - June 2014)
- Worked in 15 provinces and Erbil
- Main objective: To support targeted provincial and local governments to more effectively respond to community needs

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Governance Strengthening Project, herein referred to as GSP/Taqadum, was a 33-month program designed to strengthen the capacity of local governments to more effectively respond to citizen needs, thereby strengthening the relationships and accountability between provincial councils and their constituents. By focusing on institutional strengthening and executive oversight initiatives, GSP/Taqadum solidified responsibilities and authorities in provincial governments and strengthened the relationships between local and central governments to hold executive ministries accountable for service delivery. The project's emphasis is derived from the Provincial Powers Act of 2008, also known as Law 21, which defines the responsibilities and powers for governorate councils, effec-

tively creating the legal framework for decentralization.

During the life of the project, technical activities were centered on interventions to clarify, expand, and improve governorate council responsibilities and powers in budgeting, planning, legislation, monitoring, and oversight (consistent with the functions outlined in the Provincial Powers Act). After the provincial elections in April 2013 where the turnover in provincial council membership approached 70 percent, GSP/Taqadum expanded its technical assistance to accommodate the need to build the capacity of newly elected council members and staff. Additionally, the passage of the second amendment to Law 21 in August 2013 was another seminal event that shaped the direction of GSP/Taqadum. Article 45 of this amendment articulates an

enabling legal framework that provides governorates administrative authority and responsibility to provide services at the local level.

PROJECT PROFILE

GSP/Taqadam, headquartered in Baghdad, provided technical programming in 15 provinces as well as the province of Erbil. The project established embedded offices in 16 provinces and operated regional hub offices in Hillah (for south central region provinces), Basrah (for south region provinces), Erbil (for north region provinces), and Baghdad (for central region provinces). The project was launched in September 2011 and from the outset

was valued by counterparts for its political neutrality, responsiveness to current need, and the caliber of its technical and management-level staff. Consecutive iterations of GSP/Taqadam's work plan show the growing complexity and maturity of its technical interventions as well as the geographic depth of its program elements. The project counterparts include provincial council members and staff, governor's office, central government staff, and civil society organizations.

GSP/TAQADUM PROGRAM ELEMENTS

GSP/Taqadam implemented program elements that serve as the foundation for the project's

PROGRAM ELEMENT	ACRONYM	DEFINITION OF GSP/TAQADUM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Organizational Self-assessment and Transformation Program	OSTP	An organizational development methodology used to diagnose organizational deficiencies and implement solutions through internal consulting teams
Financial Management	–	Strengthen core financial systems by streamlining processes and procedures to improve rate of budget execution
Provincial Planning and Development Councils	PPDC	Assist provinces to meet the requirements of standing up planning councils per directive from Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Planning and to also strengthen the planning council's capacity
Citizen Participation and Community Outreach	–	Engage citizens in an inclusive and participatory planning and budgeting process and assist provinces to use different platforms to communicate information with citizens
Capacity Building for Provincial Councils	–	Mentor and educate newly elected PC members on their roles and responsibilities
Monitoring and Oversight	M & O	Train governorate and KRG engineers on quality control and quality assurance to deliver projects to standard, on time, and on budget
Essential Service Delivery Oversight / Service Delivery Performance Standards	ESDO / SDPS	Establish standards, collect indicator data, and measure service delivery gaps to effectively and efficiently improve services
Citizen Satisfaction Survey	CSS	Conduct nationwide surveys to ask citizens for input to use as a tool to monitor, oversee, and improve public services
Citizen Service Desks	CSD	Assist provinces to operate Citizen Service Desks to ensure that citizen issues are heard, recorded, and followed-up
Sub-Legislative Implementation Tracking	SLIT	Assist provinces to archive laws and decisions enacted by Provincial Councils and track them to ensure they are implemented

KEY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

OSTP: A proven mechanism for internal change management in which department members identify and implement internal improvements.

PPDCs: Advisory bodies for governors' offices (GOs) to provide ideas and products to provincial councils for their approval, via the GOs, resulting in improved collaboration.

PPLs: An important tool in determining which proposed projects receive central government funding. If an idea for a project is not on the PPL, it is difficult to implement.

ESDO: An effective way to determine if primary services are being properly delivered to citizens, and an important mechanism for correcting any deficiencies.

narrative and the bedrock of its success. The table to the left provides an easy reference to understand each program element.

MAIN ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The GSP/Taqadam project focused on 11 activity areas to strengthen the relationships between people, systems, and governance in the provinces that ultimately resulted in better service delivery and improved lives for those citizens.

Organizational Self-assessment and Transformation Program (OSTP):

Using proven systems in change management, GSP/Taqadam established eight OSTP teams from various departments in the governor's offices (the Baghdad OSTP team included provincial council members and staff) who identified deficiencies, implemented organizational improvements, and participated in the OSTP Practitioners Networking to exchange ideas, share experiences, and learn from each other. This approach ensures organizational buy-in and commitment to internal improvements, and helps promote sustainability as these champions of change work directly for the institutions they seek to improve.

Financial Management: To help improve local governments' rate of budget execution, GSP/Taqadam provided targeted assistance designed to improve the availability of working capital for contractors to complete infrastructure projects. One of the most successful interventions was

the project's introduction of a letter of credit (LOC) to facilitate the procurement and payment for goods and services from foreign suppliers so as to ensure access to an expanded range of materials and skills needed to minimize infrastructure project disruptions. GSP/Taqadam also helped local governments prepare and submit necessary financial reports and respond to audit findings. Finally, the project proposed financial and administrative changes in the Government of Iraq (GOI) budget and contract instructions to expedite budget execution.

Provincial Planning and Development Councils (PPDCs):

GSP/Taqadam institutionalized 10 of these formal advisory units that comprised representatives from provincial ministries' directorates, civil society organizations (CSOs), academics, and the private sector. The PPDCs provided a forum and coordination mechanism for various departments to meet provincial strategic and citizen's needs. GSP/Taqadam introduced two unique means of coordination to capture all sources of input: through a vertical integration, PPDCs captured citizens' needs through district and sub-district councils, and through a horizontal integration that captured sector inputs. By creating this opportunity for collaboration, GSP/Taqadam ensured a streamlined approach that accounted for different department interests and priorities. PPDCs also served as a platform for recommending activities for the project prior-

Members of the Basrah provincial council's Monitoring and GO Oversight working group visit the Zubair – Iman Ali Mosque Flyover Interchange Project in March 2014.

GSP/TAQADUM



ity lists (PPLs), increasing their status as a meaningful tool for service delivery improvements. In a true success for sustainability, many provinces' PPDC units have begun working together to agree on shared goals and visions to better integrate efforts for projects affecting more than one province.

Community Outreach/Citizen Participation: By hosting public meetings, GSP/Taqadum helped local leaders at various levels engage directly, in some cases for the first time, with their constituents to hear ideas and prioritize complaints. Not only did these interventions strengthen the trust, transparency, and accountability between leaders and citizens, it also allowed citizens to directly influence projects and contribute to local service delivery priorities. By project end, local authorities and NGOs were hosting and managing their own public meetings, a clear indication of the progress toward institutionalization of this activity. In total, 144 community meetings were held both with and without GSP/Taqadum assistance.

Capacity Building for New Provincial Councils: Fueled by the high level of provincial leadership turnover and efforts to further devolve responsibilities per the amended Law 21, GSP/Taqadum provided targeted training, workshops, and briefing notebooks to help more than 300 officials with these transitions and build the abilities of local leaders to do their jobs effectively. This material proved valuable in that the officials would not otherwise have had access to such information, and the project-sponsored Expo Conference positioned them to carry out their new roles more efficiently. GSP/Taqadum also helped provincial councils draft and adopt bylaws and transfer knowledge to the new PC committees. This was the first time the provincial councils, officials from governors' offices, and provincial directorates were gathered together to receive information about local government roles, responsibilities, and authorities. These efforts culminated in a national Expo Conference in January 2014, which brought together all elected officials to receive training, network, and

meet with potential vendors. The Expo Conference also provided a road map for implementation of Law 21 as amended. Because of these activities and workshops, GSP/Taqadum was able to minimize the potential effects of the high turnover by providing new leaders with tools, skills, and resources to carry out their responsibilities. GSP/Taqadum also helped provincial councils draft and adopt bylaws and transfer knowledge to the new PC committees.

Capital Projects Monitoring and Oversight: Standardized processes and tools help provincial officials to complete capital projects according to specifications, within budget, and on time. GSP/Taqadum provided the necessary technical interventions to build the capability of PC monitoring and GO oversight of capital projects in seven provinces. GSP/Taqadum worked with PC and GO monitoring and oversight teams to strengthen processes and harmonize procedures for inspecting delayed projects, including developing recovery programs to get these stalled projects back on track. This intervention involved applying standard best practices on selected pilot project sites in the seven-targeted provinces.

Capital Projects Monitoring and Oversight — Essential Service Delivery Oversight: Through GSP/Taqadum's Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) activities, councils and governors' offices can use hard data and collaborative means to drive improvements in service delivery provided by line ministries in

the provinces. ESDO working groups conducted site visits and surveys to measure, test, and collect data on different services and compared that data with established Iraqi standards to determine gaps in the delivery of water, sewage, trash, and drainage services in targeted neighborhoods. As a direct result of this GSP/Taqadum intervention, provincial leadership in seven provinces expended \$47.9 million in service upgrades to close the gap between actual and planned service levels. By the end of GSP/Taqadum programming activities, six provinces institutionalized ESDOs as functional units within the GO, thereby sustaining this activity and moving forward.

Capital Projects Monitoring and Oversight — Citizen Satisfaction Survey: One of the most effective ways to sharpen the focus on citizen needs is to ask their perception of the level of services they receive. A common tool for gauging citizen perceptions is a Citizen Satisfaction Survey (CSS). GSP/Taqadum conducted an initial baseline CSS in 2012, and repeated the survey in 2013. The CSS is linked directly to the project's development objective and is a measure of the overall effectiveness of GSP/Taqadum's interventions. In the Baseline Year Survey, 50.7 percent of respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed that services improved from the prior year. In the 2013 Survey, 58.9 percent of respondents answered "Yes," services improved from the Baseline Year, a gain of 8.2 percentage points.

Capital Projects Monitoring and Oversight — Citizen Service Desks (CSDs): CSDs collected issues brought forward by citizens and acted as an interface between citizens and local government. GSP/Taqadam worked with CSDs in 15 provinces to enhance the performance of previously existing GO CSDs, and to establish new desks in PCs that previously had no CSD. A key contribution of CSD support is the Issue Tracking and Reporting System (ITRS), an electronic database-driven system that currently serves as a tool to record citizen issues, track progress on addressing the issues, sort information to facilitate analysis, and produce summary reports for decision-makers. Additionally, reports from the ITRS are providing documented evidence of citizen needs and serve as a guide for ESDO units to identify service delivery gaps; ITRS is also used by PPDCs, GOs, and PCs to formulate provincial plans and budgets. ITRS was deployed and used in 13 provinces — in some instances, both at the PC and GO CSDs. ITRS is one of several incremental technology solutions that GSP/Taqadam introduced that are easy to use, had a high adoption rate, and delivered relational data that enhanced operational processes and decision-making. ITRS also allowed CSDs to provide data on service delivery performance of the line ministries in the provinces.

Sub-Legislative Implementation Tracking System (SLIT): GSP/Taqadam established a database

and software designed to input and track the status of approved legislation. Previously, laws were not easily available or accessible to the public; as a result, citizens and future council members were not always aware of what laws had been approved or their status, and there was no clear way to hold executives accountable for implementing these legislative changes. The SLIT system now serves as a means to facilitate the role of the PCs to stay abreast of progress in implementing legislation and consequently, strengthen the accountability of elected officials to the public.

Crosscutting Initiatives: Working with NGOs and Serving Vulnerable Populations: GSP/Taqadam facilitated and managed public meetings, workshops, and networking opportunities designed to improve the capacity of NGOs to incorporate concerns and priorities of vulnerable populations. The project also worked to directly engage female citizens and encourage national and provincial female leaders to promote gender equality policies and gender-responsive budgets. In the Iraqi context, gender inequality relates to the lack of access to resources and economic opportunity for women as well as unfavorable policies and legislation related to women. GSP/Taqadam activities brought the concerns and priority interventions of women and other underserved populations to the forefront of policy discussions, secured funding for meaningful interventions, and provided sustainable outlets for continued

ESDO trained volunteers conduct a survey in June 2013 in Wasit, where the governor authorized 31 billion IQD (about \$25 million) for the purchase of heavy machinery for service delivery functions based on ESDO recommendations.

GSP/TAQADUM



discussions of these concerns after the project ends.

GSP/TAQADUM'S LEGACY

In its three years working with provincial governments to help them understand their roles and responsibilities and run more efficiently and transparently, GSP/Taqadum has left an indelible mark on the governorates of Iraq and proved itself a valuable partner. GSP/Taqadum's durable systems and services are helping provinces establish fruitful partnerships with their citizens and, with them, work toward a sustainable future. Through relevant and innovative systems and effective methodologies, GSP/Taqadum developed the means by which continuous capacity building, learning, and improved service provision can occur in post-project provincial governments. The project's OSTP intervention is a prime example of this self-perpetuating methodology. There are OSTP teams in eight provinces, each continu-

ing to implement organizational improvements and focusing on citizens, results, and transparency. The OSTP principle of Iraqi identifying and solving Iraqi problems through learning by doing is propagated through the vast majority of GSP/Taqadum's program elements and is essential to the project's sustainability.

While GSP/Taqadum helped provinces understand and run PPDCs, by the end of the project many PPDCs were meeting without GSP/Taqadum assistance. These PPDCs are vertically and horizontally integrated, inclusive, and data-driven planning and budgeting entities that run efficiently using the know-how imparted by GSP/Taqadum. Monitoring and Oversight Work Groups are currently using GSP/Taqadum's site inspection techniques to check delayed projects and recommend recovery plans. They are helping provinces keep to their budgets and schedules for timely completion of capital projects.



The Ninawah governor's assistant for Planning receives her certificate at the PPDC capacity- building workshop in Erbil in April 2013. By the end of the project, many PPDCs were conducting meetings without GSP/Taqadum assistance.

GSP/Taqadum helped establish more formal and transparent communications and, as a consequence, citizens will have an ongoing platform and the necessary skill sets to interface with their leaders after the project closes. GSP/Taqadum's public participation intervention is helping connect disparate stakeholders — regular citizens and marginalized populations such as widowed and divorced women, the elderly, youth, the disabled, the unemployed, and displaced populations — to provincial planning and resource allocation processes in nine provinces, thus ensuring inclusion, a fundamental tenet of a citizen-focused public service delivery system.

GSP/Taqadum's ESDO activity was one of its most successful interventions. In the 11 provinces where ESDO work groups were established, six provinces institutionalized ESDOs as fully funded and functional units added to the GO organizational structure and will continue, post-project. These ESDO units are the most visible

models of how a GSP/Taqadum intervention was recognized for delivering superior value and is now being sustained by the counterpart. People will continue to use the GSP/Taqadum's ITRS and SLIT databases to collect and manage data and support efficient accessibility and use of government information to ensure more effective monitoring, oversight, and management of local government services.

To continue to spread the message of good local governance after the project closes, GSP/Taqadum developed innovative legacy products, including a website, a video, and desk calendars and posters for provincial offices. Additionally, GSP/Taqadum developed 13 highly informative procedure manuals to enhance the effectiveness of local government operations. These manuals can be found in Annex 1.



GSP/TAQADUM

A consultant to the Babil governor for women affairs and activists from civil society organizations at the GSP/ Taqadum National Conference on Developing Local Legislation to Stop Violence Against Women.

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

In September 2011, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Iraq/Governance Strengthening (GSP/Taqadum) Project. GSP/Taqadum was designed to enable provincial and local governments to respond more effectively to community needs. The project had two components:

- Component I: Institutional Strengthening. Institutionalize provincial and local governments' core authorities and responsibilities.
- Component II: Executive Oversight. Provincial and local elected officials hold executive ministries accountable for improved services.

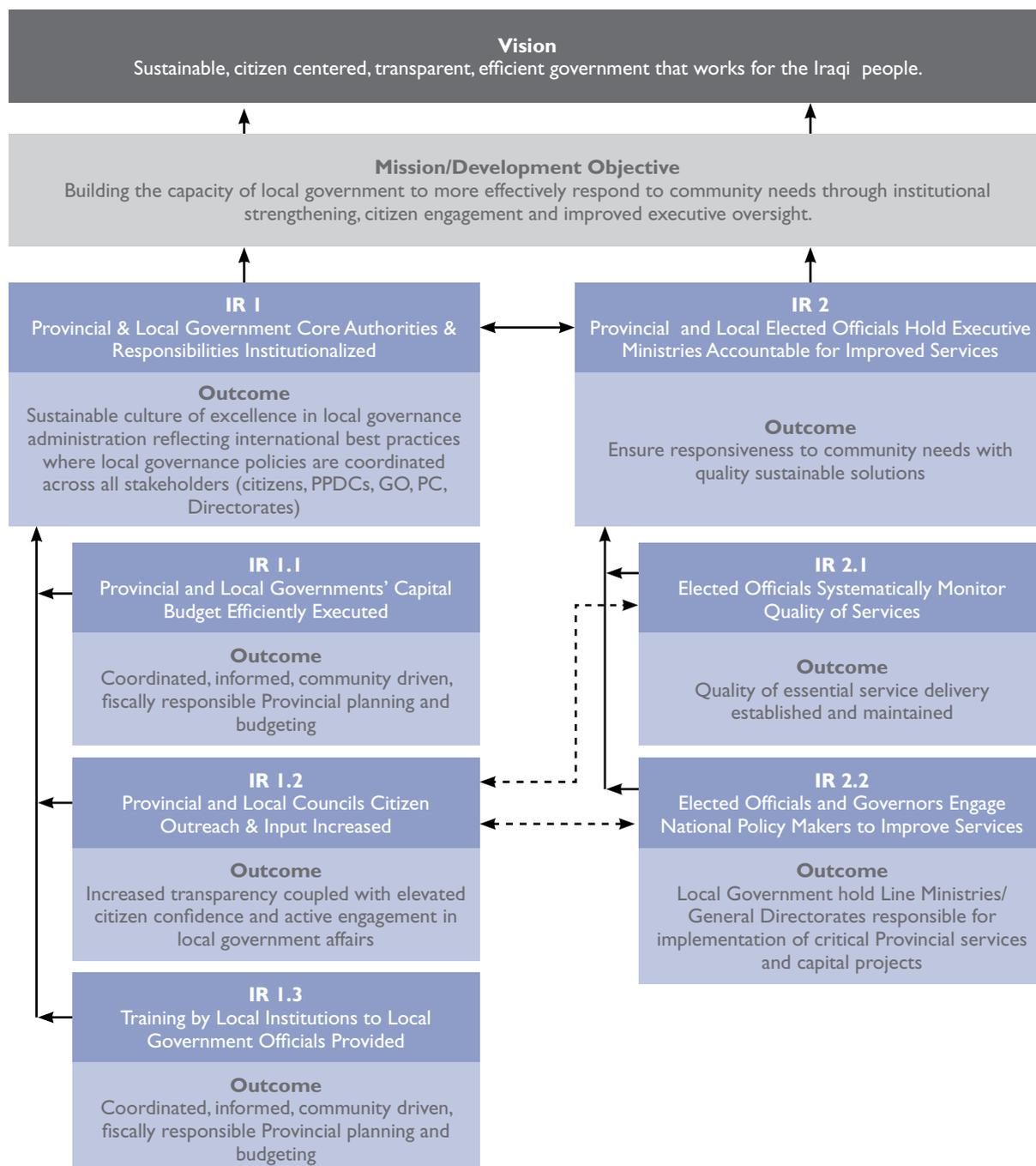
Under each component, GSP/Taqadum promoted provincial and local government institutional development to build constructive provincial council

and governor's office capacity and oversight mechanisms. Activities were demand-driven and Iraq-led, supporting government and civil society efforts to strengthen the responsiveness of provincial and local governments to community needs. The estimated distribution of project resources was 60 percent for Component I and 40 percent for Component II.

The project was guided by its results framework with the overall goal of strengthening the ability of local governments to effectively serve their citizens.

Through recruitment of talented staff (most of whom were Arabic speakers and, when relevant, Kurdish speakers) and strategic program design, GSP/Taqadum was able to successfully implement a program that strengthened the connection between local governments and the citizens they represent.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK



THE GSP/TAQADUM APPROACH: SYSTEMS, PEOPLE, SERVICES

With the mandate of improving local governments' abilities to respond to citizen needs, GSP/Taqadum identified effective and easily sustainable solutions. The result was an approach that focused on establishing streamlined systems to meet peoples' needs and improve services. The three pillars of systems, people, and services factored into all activities to maintain a clear framework and keep the end goal in mind — improving the lives of Iraqi citizens.

Several critical elements helped to shape the GSP/Taqadum project and direct its programming and activities:

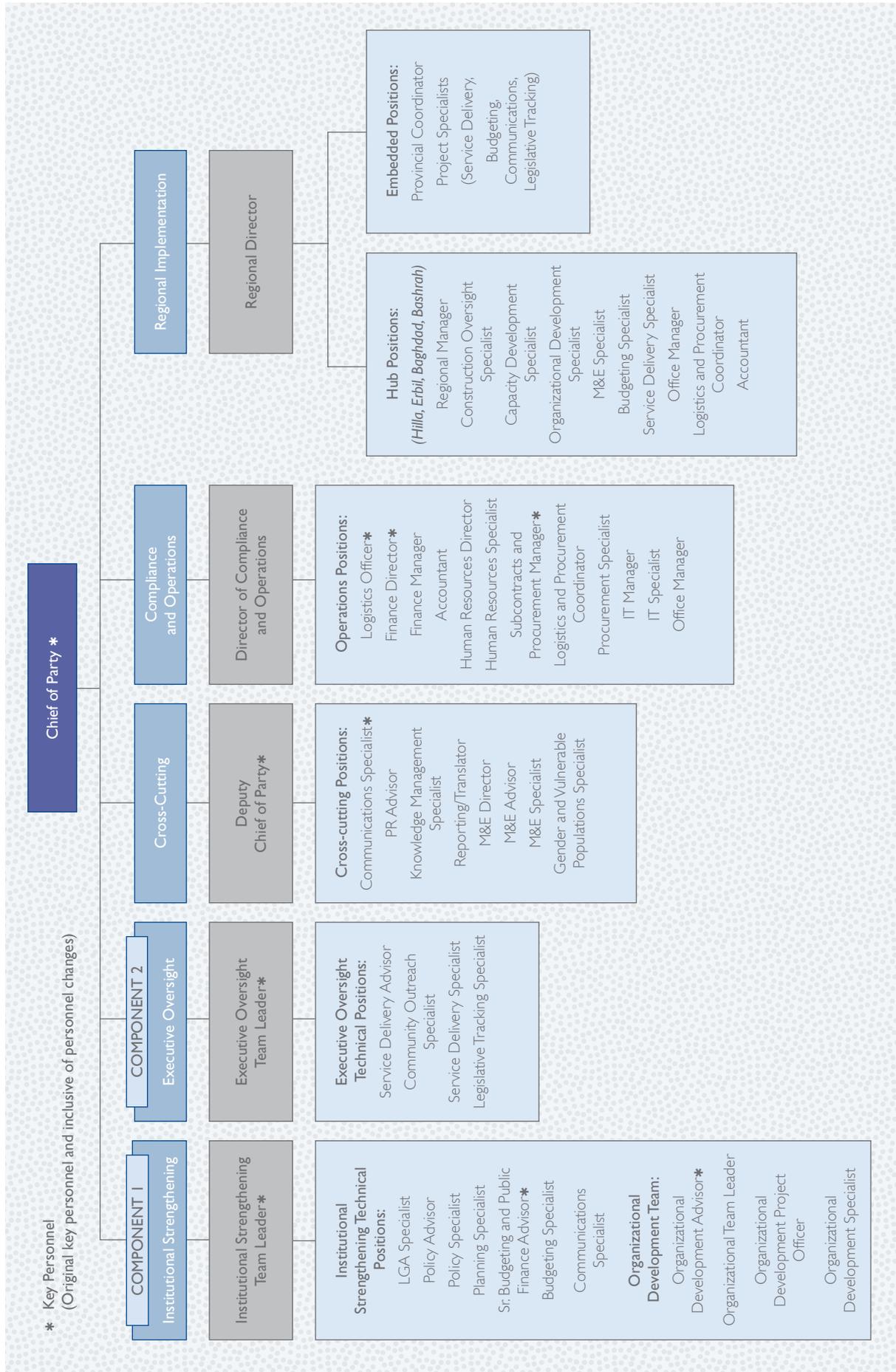
Previous USAID local governance projects. The GSP/Taqadum project built on the successes of previous USAID-funded local governance projects. Previous staff on these projects joined GSP/Taqadum and brought talent, experience, knowledge, and connections/relationships from the previous Local Governance Project and the Iraq Community Action Project. GSP/Taqadum leveraged these previous efforts by building on the data gathered, identifying gaps in achievements based on performance standards, and develop targeted systems and mechanisms to reduce these gaps.

Provincial elections. In April 2013, provincial elections resulted in significant turnover, with nearly 70 percent of positions filled by new members. Because of this substantial change, local governments took several months to form and begin working cohesively following these elections. This presented a unique opportunity as the timing of the elections coincided with the amendment of Law 21 (referenced above). As local governments adjusted to the results of the elections, GSP/Taqadum adjusted its programming to respond to the accompanying challenges. The project's resilience in structure, strategy, systems, and skill sets allowed GSP/Taqadum to meet challenges and accommodate changes to the project's scope of work.

Law 21 and its amendment. The passage of the second amendment to the Provincial Powers Act (Law 21) in August 2013, in particular Article 45 that devolves the services delivered by eight ministries to provinces by August 2015, brought increased pressure on governorates to think seriously about their capacity to deliver public services. Building institutional capacity and overseeing service delivery ministries provided the conditions necessary for adopting an improved service delivery agency model; as a consequence, the work of GSP/Taqadum became more valuable to the provincial governments served by the project. As detailed in Section III below, following the passage of the amendment, GSP/Taqadum provided immediate and targeted capacity building to both provincial and ministerial directorates to prepare for the transfer of these services.

Iraqi human resources. A project the size and scope of GSP/Taqadum required considerable staffing levels to provide the necessary resources for implementation. See organizational chart on next page for the most recent organizational structure. There were multiple opportunities and challenges related to hiring Iraqi citizens.

- *Opportunities:* Unlike many post-conflict countries served by USAID projects, Iraq has a long history of higher education, and well-trained staff are available to be hired. With a diaspora dating back to the rise of the previous regime,



some Iraqis have a Western education and work experience. Additionally, because USAID and other donors have fielded projects in Iraq since 2003, a group of Iraqi development professionals has been created. The hiring of highly qualified individuals aided GSP/Taqadum and explains the success of this Iraqi-led project. Using these talented staff with a successful track record from previous USAID projects added credibility to the project and helped with the initial transition early in project implementation. In addition, these tech-savvy professionals, contributed to the proliferation of technology in GSP/Taqadum's technical programming: four database systems were deployed in the provinces during the life of the project. Using local talent leaves the governorates with the ability to sustain these systems.

- *Challenges:* Competing against the growing oil industry for trained staff was challenging especially in a key province such as Basrah. In resource-rich provinces, oil companies pay disproportionately more and offer more permanent employment than a USAID-funded project. Additionally, certain programs, especially valuable ones like the Special Immigrant Visa and the International Organization for Migration programs, provide many Iraqis with a chance to relocate their families, take advantage of new opportunities, and escape any potential dan-

gers they face in Iraq. However, both programs claimed a number of highly trained GSP/Taqadum staff during the course of the project that were difficult, and in some cases impossible, to replace.

Security. Security challenges served as a backdrop to nearly all technical interventions and dictated the ability of staff, both Iraqi and expatriate, to conduct programming. With the main GSP/Taqadum office in Baghdad located on a secure compound, project staff had restricted abilities to meet with stakeholders and USAID. In the last year of the project in particular, security conditions deteriorated substantially, with casualty levels reaching those of 2007 – 2008. This sharp increase in security-related restrictions affected program interventions in the project's final year, affecting project implementation for project staff and provincial officials. For more information related to the security challenges the project managed, please see Chapter Six: Problems Encountered and Lessons Learned.

GSP/TAQADUM'S MAIN ACTIVITIES BY COMPONENT

Component 1: Institutional Strengthening	
Activity	Description
Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation	Establishing internal resources and procedures to promote continual changes and improvements
Financial Management	Helping governments improve their budget execution rates, streamline financial reporting, and reduce contractor risk
Provincial Planning and Development Councils	Formal advisory councils to coordinate across various departments based on input from directores, academia, CSOs, and the private sector
Community Outreach/Citizen Participation	Through public meetings, citizens were able to voice their concerns, debate priorities, and better engage with their leaders.
Capacity Building for New Provincial Councils and the Erbil GO	Targeted trainings and workshops to help new PC members transition to their roles and respond to the passage of Law 21's second amendment
Component 2: Executive Oversight	
Activity	Description
Monitoring and Oversight of Capital Projects	Training Governorate and KRG Engineers on Quality Control and Quality Assurance to deliver capital projects on time and meeting standards
Essential Service Delivery Oversight	Establishing Standards, collecting indicator data, measuring service delivery gaps to effectively and efficiently improve essential services
Citizen Satisfaction Surveys	Governorates ask citizens about public service delivery as a tool to monitor; oversee and improve services
Citizen Service Desks	Citizen issues are heard, recorded and followed up; information on areas of concern are conveyed to officials to inform planning and budgeting decisions
Sub-Legislative Implementation Tracking	Laws and Decisions enacted by Provincial Councils are followed up to ensure they are implemented and barriers to implementation are overcome

CHAPTER TWO

MAIN ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

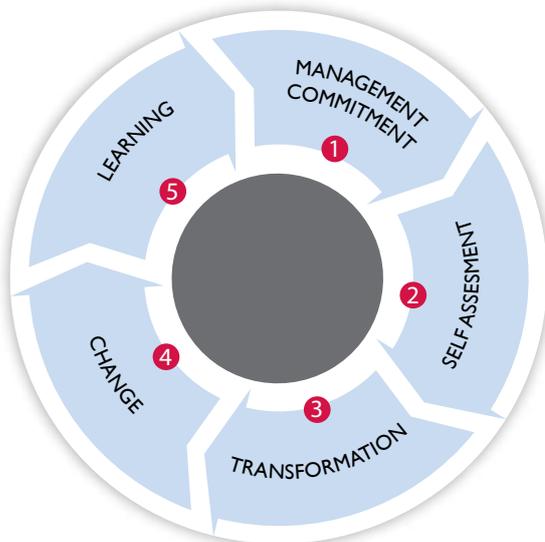
Over the course of the project, GSP/Taqadum successfully completed activities under its two components that further strengthened the abilities of local governments to directly enhance the lives of Iraqi citizens. The OSTP cycle graphic highlights the main elements of each component, and further description is provided below.

Monitoring and evaluation information can be found in Annex 2 in the DVD appended to this report.

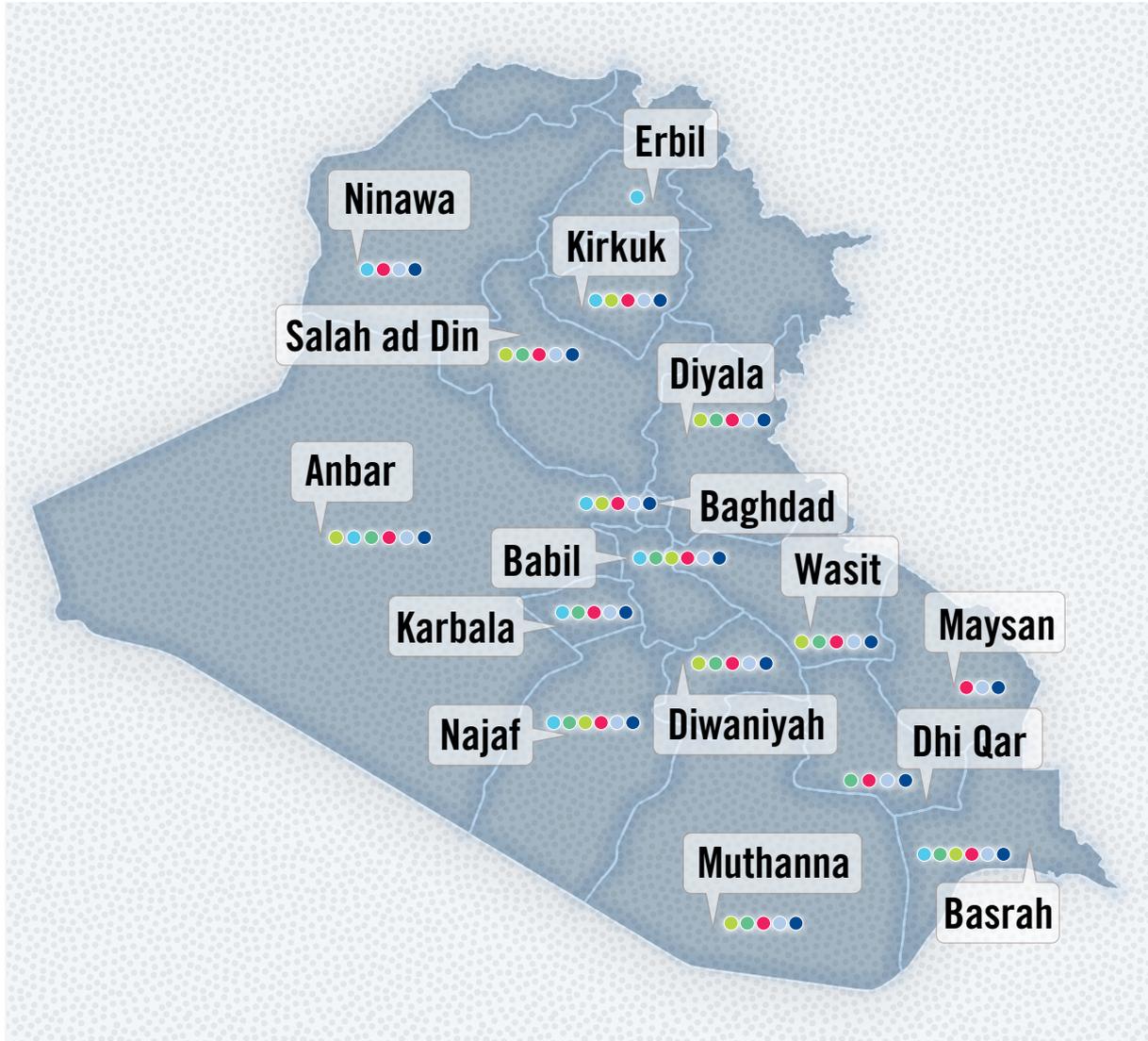
ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM (OSTP)

The opportunity shaped by Law 21's Second Amendment to affect greater provincial self-determination was pivotal to realizing a more citizen-focused and results-oriented public service delivery system. However, any change in the ownership of directorates from central to local jurisdiction must equate with a measurable improvement in services. In the Iraqi context, this devolution must transform the existing bureaucratic model into a service-oriented system of governance. In a service-centered approach, the front lines are redrawn and lie at the intersection of the end user (citizen) and

OSTP CYCLE



MAP OF GSP/TAQADUM ACTIVITIES BY LOCATION



- **OSTP - Organization Self-Assessment and Transformation Program**
 Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Karbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninawa
- **PPDC - Provincial Planning and Development Councils**
 Anbar, Babil, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Diyala, Karbala, Muthanna, Najaf, Salah ad Din, Wasit
- **ESDO - Essential Service Delivery Oversight**
 Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Diwaniya, Diyala, Kirkuk, Muthanna, Najaf, Salah ad Din, Wasit
- **CSD - Citizen Service Desk**
 Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninawa, Salah Al Din, Wasit
- **Citizen Engagement**
 Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Wasit
- **Financial Management Planning and Budgeting**
 Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Wasit

the provider (local directorate); the latter must be backed by a commensurate support structure all the way down to the governor. Solutions are driven by the engagement between citizens and service providers on the front lines, not pushed down from above.

Additionally, improvements to systems, processes, and structures are needed, but staff must adopt these changes to make it work. To facilitate this paradigm shift, organizational development consulting teams in eight provinces trained and mentored by GSP/Taqadum using the OSTP methodology, are primed to assume greater responsibilities in the emerging structural reforms at the local level. Governor's office (GO) staff in seven provinces and Baghdad provincial council (PC) team members are well trained in diagnosing organizational deficiencies and identifying solutions. Selected from different organizational layers, membership is consistent with the OSTP-focused competencies in finance, human resources, processes, knowledge management, and leadership. The governor endorses the membership and is the de facto leader of the team, championing their cause. The OSTP teams work as collectives and operate on the principle of Iraqi identifying and solving Iraqi problems through learning-by-doing. Three OSTP pillars underscore all solutions proposed by the team: they must be citizen-centered, results focused, and transparent.

Ultimately, the team embodies the bottom-up approach to identifying and solving problems, an unfamiliar precept in a country steeped in adherence to positional hierarchy, authority, and taking orders. These provincial teams draw strength from each other through a common network of practitioners. Sharing best practices and solutions is fundamental to their system of improvement, which espouses the cutting-edge power of information sharing and peer-to-peer learning over the outdated notion that power rests with individually held information.

When governors sign on to champion the work of the team, they understand that members are allowed to spend up to 25 percent of their workweek on OSTP-related activities. In a team of 15, using the higher threshold of allowed time equates to 750 person days (based on 200 working days year) available for organizational development activities during the course of a year. USAID's commitment is no less. Since the inception of GSP/Taqadum, approximately 25 percent of all recorded program contact hours (number of participants multiplied by number of training and technical assistance hours) have been dedicated to building the capacity of the organizational development practitioners from the eight participating provinces.

Most of the practitioners have gone through one cycle of instruction, mentoring, prac-

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT END STATE:

For three provinces, GSP/Taqadum saw significant improvements between the benchmark survey in June 2013 and the follow-up survey in February 2014. In Basrah, for example, contractor payment time was reduced from 17 days to 9 days, in Karbala from 9 to 5, and in Wasit from 11 to 5 days. To ensure the sustainability of these changes, GSP/Taqadum worked with provinces to make more rapid check signing a priority for the governor. By using new systems, process tools, and manuals more frequently, contractors will continue to be paid in a timely manner.

SNAPSHOT

Organizational Self-Assessment Guides

Provinces to Build On Success



GSP/TAQADUM

A civil engineer and Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Unit team leader from the Ninawa Governor's Office.

The three pillars of OSTP:

- *Citizen Focus*
- *Effectiveness*
- *Transparency*

“ Before OSTP we had no clear processes by which to find internal bottlenecks. Now we've implemented basic OSTP processes so we can improve the way our office and our government function.” – Saba Hasan

“The first time GSP/Taqadum [staff] came to Ninawa to talk to the governor about the Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Program [OSTP], the governor liked what he heard and straight away committed to creating a team for some of us to learn the OSTP system,” recalls Saba Hasan, a civil engineer in the Ninawa Governor's Office.

The USAID/Iraq Governance Strengthening Program – GSP/Taqadum – assists local governments to effectively respond to citizens' needs, and Ninawa is one of eight provinces with functioning self-assessment teams.

OSTP is a holistic development approach for building the capacity of the public sector to continuously improve its performance. It is a tool that empowers employees to strengthen the institutions in which they work.

GSP/Taqadum has supported implementation of this program of continuous institutional development and self-assessment for provincial governments. The OSTP improvement system is based on proven methods used in post-conflict countries. Fundamentally, GSP/Taqadum's “Excellence in Government”, the program's application of OSTP, is a bottom-up approach to organizational self-assessment against standard best practices. It is used to develop a road map to address deficiencies found during the assessment process and to implement the necessary changes. The cycle is then repeated.

“I heard about OSTP and I did not understand what it would do for us,” says Hasan. “Before OSTP, we had no clear processes by which to find internal bottlenecks. After a few months, we understood that OSTP made sense for us and we started to use the methodology to improve our own departmental procedures. Now we've implemented basic OSTP processes so we can improve the way our offices, and those of others, function.”

OSTP received a warm reception from the Ninawa government, as it has in the other provinces employing the practice. Soon the Ninawa OSTP unit became aware of more important changes to be made, like opening communications with other service departments and holding monthly meetings to update the governor.

“Before OSTP we didn't know how the national goals of the central government would impact us. Now we know that however it happens [including decentralization], we will be able to handle change,” Hasan said proudly.

IMPROVING INTERNAL AUDIT RESULTS

When the independent Supreme Audit Board issued two reports for the PC and GO identifying numerous errors, GSP/Taqadum realized internal audit units were weak and ineffective. To respond, the project developed an internal auditing manual and distributed it to PCs. Additionally, many PCs were not aware that the Supreme Audit Board had its own manual explaining standards against which audits were measured. To reduce SAB exposure GSP/Taqadum developed a Self-Audit Manual addressing topics such as procurement, awarding contracts, and responding to violations identified in audit reports. Ultimately, three GOs and four PCs adopted GSP/Taqadum's self-audit tool. Now that PCs and GOs are using these tools, future audits are expected to yield fewer errors.

tical training, and acquiring change management skills, and have been able to implement low-cost, low-complexity solutions. With at least one cadre of individuals who have completed the OSTP process, many departments are now in a position to continue these procedures for self-improvement. This is key for sustainability, as it will allow changes to continue in a demand-driven manner and increase the number of staff who are managing these processes. Addressing higher impact solutions (that typically have a higher cost) will require local government to budget relevant funds and for practitioners to acquire higher level skills in advanced process mapping, facilitation, negotiation, and analytical techniques.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

One of Iraq's significant budget challenges is the low rate of budget execution. Frequently, allocated funds remain unspent and are then forfeited to the central government to be re-allocated with the next budget cycle. Additionally, contractors and other firms are concerned about the slow payment and procedures at the central and provincial levels. Often these contractors or firms are uncertain about beginning projects or, in the worst scenarios, they begin projects then stop them before they finish due to problems with payment. While these issues are complex, GSP/Taqadum identified a targeted way to streamline this system and reduce the amount of time

provinces took to pay contractors. One intervention worked with three provinces to reduce the number of signatures needed to approve a contractor payment by flowcharting the process, finding bottlenecks and redundancies, and modifying the process. Provincial leaders in the three provinces (Basrah, Wasit, and Karbala) responded positively to these developments.

To complement these interventions, GSP/Taqadum also worked to institute an effective letter of credit (LOC) system. Due to weak enforcement of rule of law and an enabling legislative framework, international firms hesitate to sell their goods and services due to the uncertainty of being paid. However, with GSP/Taqadum assistance, five provinces began to work with the Trade Bank of Iraq to create their own accounts. The positive effect is two-fold: 1) allowing provinces to "escrow" funds that would otherwise lapse if not allocated, and 2) engaging the Trade Bank of Iraq provides guarantees to investors and firms by allowing provinces to issue letters of credit. In Dhi Qar province alone, 10 LOCs have been issued. The province was able to open an LOC and purchase the necessary materials from a French supplier to complete the Al-Hadarat Bridge development in Nasiriyah, a USD \$33 million project. Separately, the province is also using LOCs to source from foreign suppliers high-quality spare parts and radiation detection equipment for a power plant.

SEPARATING BUDGETS

Within some GOs, such as Wasit, budgets for operations and investments were rolled up into one pot of funds. To improve budget management, GSP/Taqadam helped separate these funds into two sources, one for operations for government offices (such as salaries, maintenance, office equipment, etc.) and the other for capital/investments. The formal separation of these two sources will result in better management and stewardship of state assets and is synonymous with fund accounting systems where the collection and use of funds are regulated by law.

GSP/Taqadam also worked with PCs to improve financial reporting and controls. Prior to GSP/Taqadam, PCs routinely failed to meet financial reporting requirements and timelines. For example, although financial reports are due to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) on the 10th of each month, provinces would routinely submit reports well after that deadline. After working with the project, reports are now submitted by the established deadline. Working closely with PC accounting and auditing teams, GSP/Taqadam improved overall reporting and preparation of trial balances. In addition to monthly reports, GSP/Taqadam helped prepare and submit end-of-year accounts on time in accordance with MOF instructions; the submission of year-end closing accounts is a prerequisite for supplemental funding. These improvements in financial reporting not only met auditing requirements, but improved overall budget transparency and accountability as funds can now be tracked and the government can see where the money is going. A new chart of accounts was established in 2013 and GSP/Taqadam worked with provinces to roll this out. Finally, the project provided capacity building for integrated planning and budgeting processes by helping provinces work more closely on project priority lists and ensure that plans did not exceed allocations.

Lessons learned. In some provinces, there was less financial management success and program traction with governor's offices

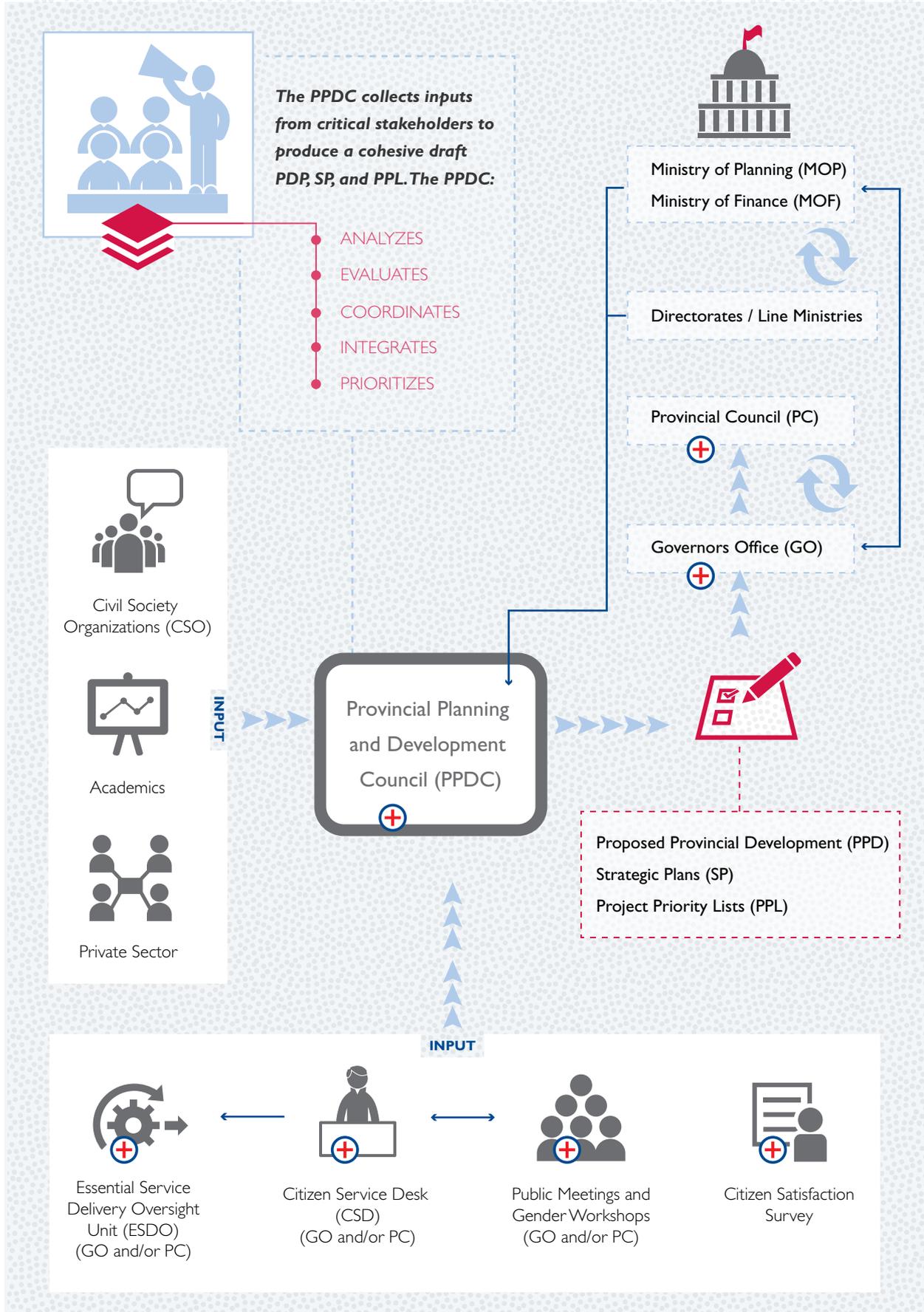
than with PCs for administrative tasks such as preparing reports and trial balances. This was due to the much bigger accounting structures within governor's offices. Accounting units did not have sufficient staff and capacity to prepare quality reports by deadlines, and remain in need of more accounting training.

PROVINCIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

The PPDCs serve as a formal mechanism to streamline planning by consolidating disparate infrastructure plans, stakeholders, and funding sources into an integrated planning platform at the local level to more efficiently meet development needs. The membership of the PPDCs is inclusive and draws its representation from academia, private sector, civil society, directorates, and local government. One of the hallmarks of the PPDC is its focus on citizen priorities and its use of service delivery data to frame decision-making.

Coordination lies at the heart of the work of the PPDC. It is in many respects a singular platform for advancing provincial planning and has performed admirably. For the budget year 2014, the PPDCs in many of the provinces supported by GSP/Taqadam, was the final arbiter of all projects that eventually made it into a common (final) provincial PPL that was approved by the PC. This approach ensured that duplication was avoided and piecemeal project planning was minimized. In the recent past, before the advent of PPDCs it

PPDC IMPLEMENTATION



GSP/ Taqadum Intervention

PPDC END STATE:

In some provinces, PPDCs are already meeting without GSP/Taqadam assistance. In Diwaniyah, the GO has allocated USD \$8,000 for operational support and office space for the PPDC. In Najaf, the PPDC received USD \$25,000 and furniture to help institutionalize PPDC management. These actions ensure the sustainability of these committees and help secure their role in local government. Other provinces are following suit by establishing office spaces and operating budgets.

was not uncommon to encounter situations where a road would be built only for it to be ripped up to lay down pipes due to the absence of basic coordination. PPDCs are leading the planning effort in an inclusive, organized, and systematized manner.

Activity Spotlight: One PPDC, one vision. To maximize the PPDC's abilities to serve in their advisory role to governors, GSP/Taqadam focused on building skills in anticipating the future and identifying needed interactions to achieve future results. Workshops helped participants ask the question, "What do you want your provinces to look like in 10 years?" From there, participants would ask, "What needs to happen in each sector? Within each sector, what kinds of policies do I need to get that in place? What needs to go into the budget?" By bringing GOs, directorates, and other community organizations together to tackle these tough questions, PPDCs became an advisory technical wing for the governor to translate PC policies into programs and projects and assist the PCs in setting policies.

GSP/Taqadam worked with PPDCs and different sectors to help identify criteria for projects, set policies, and update indicators; GSP/Taqadam also helped improve structures, organizations, and bylaws within PPDCs. The councils also worked with the project to plan around the budget cycle to ensure proposed projects were added to the PPL in time to receive funding allocations. (For example, GSP/Taqadam produced and subse-

quently trained staff on a Planning and Budgeting Manual). In several provinces, significant numbers of projects on the PPLs were added via PPDC channels and, in some cases, PPLs incorporated direct citizen suggestions for the first time. Because these PPLs were prepared in a transparent and professional manner with input from the PPDC, the PC was unable to make radical or subjective changes to approved items. (Previously, the PC prepared the list based on social and political influences, thus the inclusion of the PPDC process is making the PPLs more transparent.) To ensure sustainability, GSP/Taqadam worked with PPDCs to develop workplans for the preparation of the upcoming PPL, including conducting public meetings, vetting and filtering citizen suggestions, securing overall PPDC approval, and submitting to the PC for final review and approval.

Activity Spotlight: Najaf keeps the lights on. When electricity production increased at the national level, the PPDC in Najaf took notice and urged the department of electricity to complete the construction of intermediary power stations to capitalize on the increased availability of electricity and to distribute excess wattage to underserved areas in the province. Working closely with the GO, now 11 out of 14 substations are complete, capacity has been increased, and citizens are experiencing extended hours of grid-based electrical power.



Information about citizen concerns are integrated into the project priority list (PPL) at a Kirkuk public meeting.

GSP/TAQADUM

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION END STATE:

In four provinces, citizen participation laws have been formally adopted. Consequently, citizen participation units were established based on the law, incorporating these units as part of the PC structure to ensure sustainability of public participation after GSP/Taqadum closes.

Lessons learned. In provinces where GSP/Taqadum has been heavily involved with PPDCs, there could be a period of transition as these bodies attempt to assert their identity without project assistance. PPDCs need to be cognizant of the political headwinds and provide value or else their influence will diminish. The PPDCs need to advance their work in an efficient manner in order to stay relevant. One obvious solution is for PPDCs to approach planning in a more scientific way driven by the use of appropriate planning related data. For example, in Basrah, the PPDC was subsumed into a larger GO planning body due to the PPDC's failure to establish its relevance while in Najaf, layers of overlap are emerging between PPDC and the Reconstruction Committee and this situation needs to be resolved in an expedient manner. Given the procedures of GOs, PPDCs comprised a small group in the overall structure. In other cases, turnover had a negative effect. In Diwaniyah, the former governor was not re-elected, and PPDC work was delayed for three months until the new governor assumed

office. Still other provinces, such as Najaf, experienced pushback due to a fear of role redundancy — given the existing Reconstruction Commission — and this province took two months to reconcile the two units when PPDCs were first introduced. In Basrah, where the PPDC initially functioned as a strong unit with dedicated resources, it was treated as a lower priority when the new governor took office.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

For central and local governments to be responsive to citizen needs and requests, issues must be identified and communicated. This process requires citizen engagement and a streamlined, effective procedure for capturing citizen voices and making them heard by relevant stakeholders. To facilitate this two-way dialogue, GSP/Taqadum provided several effective interventions such as hosting and managing public meetings to capture citizens' concerns and ideas.

Through these meetings, local officials and citizens were able to

SNAPSHOT

Culture of Excellence Grows in the Babil Governor's Office



GSP/TAQADUM

An OSTP team meeting at the Babil Governor's Office.

“ The success of OSTP has been because the GSP team guided us, but it was our staff that made the decisions and did the work. I've never worked with such a worthwhile program before, and I don't anticipate that there will ever be a better program in the future.”

**--Mr. Mohammed Omran,
Manager of the Risk
Management Unit of the
Babil Governor's Office**

Since 2005, initiatives have been in place to enhance decentralization by defining the responsibilities and powers of provincial councils. Despite these advancements, local governments are still largely unable to reach out to communities to discern public priorities.

The Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, builds the capacity of local governments through training, technical assistance, and through the Organizational Self-assessment and Transformation Program (OSTP). This methodology empowers individuals within an organization to support continued analysis and improvement, ultimately building a “culture of excellence” as they identify and implement organizational reforms toward concrete results.

Mohammed Al Masoodi, Governor of Babil, was the first GSP/Taqadum provincial counterpart to launch OSTP, and saw quick results. After GSP/Taqadum provided initial OSTP training, the governor designated an internal OSTP Team who worked closely with GSP/Taqadum to plan and conduct organizational benchmarking, the first of its kind in the short history of Iraq's new provincial institutions. According to the Babil governor, “The report prepared by the Babil OSTP Team, with support from GSP/Taqadum, encourages us to move forward in this program in order to transform the organization and ultimately reach a level of excellence in providing citizen services.”

The team completed interviews and surveys with relevant staff and officials from their organization. Falah Hassan Noais, head of the Governor's office and a member of the OSTP team, said, “I believe that OSTP has put its hand on the wound that our organization definitely suffers from ... confirmed by the data gathered on each criterion during the second phase of the program. This confirms the need to continue with this very important program in order to achieve organizational transformation, something to which the governorate's leadership envisions and aspires.”

The Babil OSTP team has adopted a more citizen-centered approach to their work. Mohammed Omran, manager of the Risk Management Unit in the governor's office, explained, “A complaint is not just a complaint anymore. Admittedly, in the past, complaints were not always dealt with properly. Sometimes they were taken care of, sometimes forgotten. Now a complaint is an issue that a citizen is facing that must be resolved ... it is a duty.”

MAKING THEIR VOICES HEARD

In Ain al Tamar District, farmers raised concerns at a public meeting about selling their dates: At the time, farmers could only sell their dates in one location, 8km from their village. When this issue was raised at the meeting, attendees were able to coordinate with the PC and advocate for a better system. The PC sprung into action and launched smaller receiving centers within the district, providing multiple collection points for farmers.

have an effective dialogue in a non-threatening and ultimately mutually beneficial setting. If citizens raised complaints about pending projects or developed consensus-based PPLs, this was a chance to interact with the proper authority who was able to help resolve some of the problems to ensure project mobilization or completion. These community outreach meetings were frequently conducted in districts and subdistricts to solicit grassroots-level involvement and information, and served as an important link to PPDCs. Engaging PCs early in the process helped integrate concerns, raised them to the appropriate level, and had the added benefit of building governor support for proposed projects.

In the four provinces where a citizen participation law has been passed, such as Diwaniyah, citizen participation units have been created. These citizen participation units now have the ability to conduct public meetings independently, and meet with various unions and associations to identify sector-specific problems and relay them to appropriate PC members. In some cases, liaisons have been appointed at the district and subdistrict levels to facilitate frequent, targeted dialogue and serve as the first link to the PC on critical issues.

Citizen participation efforts in some instances also effectively engaged local NGOs. For example, Diwaniyah conducted public meetings for vulnerable groups and five NGOs (spe-

cializing in women, youth, the elderly, the handicapped, and widows/divorcees) held meetings and submitted priorities to the PPDC. Through this, the PC realized the value of engaging citizens and proceeded to allocate 500,000 IQD to each of the five NGOs to continue to hold public events. Seizing this opportunity to maximize their funding, GSP/Taqadam trained NGOs on how to prepare project plans, conduct public meetings, conduct a feasibility study, and link their objectives with those of local governments, furthering the project's support of emerging trends connecting the public to local government.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NEW PROVINCIAL COUNCILS AND ERBIL GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Two major events in 2013 prompted a focus on increasing the capacity of provincial councils. First, in April 2013, provincial elections resulted in a nearly 70 percent turnover, bringing large numbers of new and less experienced members into local governments. Second, in August 2013, Law 21 was amended to transfer significant levels of service delivery responsibility to the provincial governments. To mitigate the potential challenges of these two events and increase the ability of PCs to absorb these new responsibilities, GSP/Taqadam developed materials and launched a special four-day capacity building initiative in October 2013. The workshop addressed the implications of the amendment and how these

changes would affect the role of provincial staff and the impact on budget decisions. Participants were eager to be involved in these discussions — more than 300 individuals attended, well exceeding project expectations for 250 attendees. At the first official meeting of the PCs, GSP/Taqadum presented each PC member with a briefing book containing Law 21 and its amendments, the constitution, laws passed in the governorates, and an explanation of the legislative process. The project also assisted each PC with drafting and passing of its bylaws. GSP/Taqadum was able to address and respond to new needs for the Erbil Governor's Office through the provision of training in International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) standards and other international standards.

DECENTRALIZATION: GSP/TAQADUM'S EXPO CONFERENCE

Provides a Necessary Forum for Iraq's Leaders to Discuss Democracy and Governance and Develop a Roadmap to Implement Administrative Decentralization as Required in Law 21, as Amended

In response to the passage of amendments to the Provincial Powers Act (Law 21) by the Iraqi Parliament in August 2013, and building on the workshops discussing roles and responsibilities of the provincial government, GSP/Taqadum hosted the First National Conference on Developing a Roadmap for Implementing Law 21, as Amended,

on January 12-13, 2014. Amended for the second time, the law now transfers the enormous responsibility for delivering the most fundamental public services including water, sewer, solid waste, roads, education, health, youth and sports, housing, agriculture, labor, and social affairs from eight ministries previously providing these services to the governorates along with allocated funds, by August of 2015.

The conference provided an opportunity for central and governorate officials to discuss decentralization in a public forum. The conference was held under the auspices of Mr. Nouri Maliki, the Iraqi Prime Minister and Chair of the Higher Commission for Coordination among the Provinces (HCCP), and under the patronage of Dr. Torhan Al-Mufti, State Minister for Governorates Affairs and Secretary of the HCCP. Both officials emphasized the importance of and the duty to provide quality services to citizens. Prime Minister Maliki reminded officials that, "With authority, comes responsibility."

U.S. Ambassador Stephen Becroft shared his thoughts on democracy by quoting American president Abraham Lincoln who "set forth the guiding principle for our government when he said that a successful and legitimate government must be of the people, by the people, and for the people."

The conference represented the first major step in creating a consensus on measures governorates

DECENTRALIZATION END STATE:

Governorates prepare for administrative decentralization using the GSP/Taqadum road map. They are taking the first steps in cooperation with the central government ministries and with the full awareness of the Prime Minister.

can take to decentralize service delivery. Dr. James Mayfield, the internationally recognized scholar on Middle Eastern decentralization and devolution, made recommendations for a roadmap to address the challenges presented by the second amendment to Law 21.

The GSP/Taqadum EXPO Conference was also an exposition of services available to local governments. The EXPO offered professionally designed booth space for private firms and USAID implementing partners to present their offerings to officials attending the event. Fourteen companies offering consulting, information technology, capacity building

and training, communications, and banking services, as well as heavy equipment and machinery firms that are poised to establish valuable public-private partnership with Iraq local governments, set up booths to display their services. More than 60 representatives of these firms spent countless hours discussing services with government officials. Additionally, representatives from other USAID-funded implementing partners — Tarabot, Access to Justice, the Primary Healthcare Program (PHCP), the Foras project, and Broadening Participation through Civil Society (BPCS) — established booths and were able to showcase their programs and activities to high-ranking

THE 4 PHASES OF DECENTRALIZATION			
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Task Force Formation: Governorate Task Forces will drive implementation and were the primary counterparts that GSP/Taqadum engaged. Sub-committees were created in each of the targeted governorates for each targeted ministry: Health, Education, and Municipalities and Public Works.	Assessment and Recommendations: The Task Force sub-committees gather existing information on organizational structures, functions, authorities, and sectoral coordination arrangements for each of the selected ministries and their directorates. Thereafter, the sub-committees will analyze the collected data and report their findings to the Task Force. The assessment report will be the basis upon which the Task Forces propose a timeline and tasks, services, and competencies to be transferred from central ministry jurisdiction to the governorates.	Development of Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation (ICI) and Service Delivery Improvements (SDI) Plans: Governorate Task Forces will develop a set of guiding principles and criteria to inform their developed plans for administrative decentralization.	Consensus Building: Key officials from each of the five Governorates will engage in ongoing discussions with their respective central ministry and among Governorates to obtain and maintain a consensus on the distribution of tasks and services performed at the central and local levels. Simultaneously, key representatives from all Governorate Task Forces will convene to share their proposals and agree on the decentralization of tasks and services and the timeline associated with each transferred unit.



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Iraqi COMSEC General Secretary Dr. Ali Al Alaq and Najaf Governor Adnan Al Zurf at the First National Conference for Improving the Provincial Management Regulatory Framework and the Execution Rate of the Provincial Investment Budgets in Najaf in March 2014.

officials from USAID, including the Mission Director and the Director of the Capacity Building Office, ministries, directorates, and governorates who attended the conference. The Iraqi Prime Minister joined the U.S. Ambassador for a tour of the booths.

Activity Spotlight: B2B means booth to business. After visits to EXPO vendor booths, provincial officials were able to learn about key services potential partners could provide. For example, one of the vendors, Development Iraq (DI), is currently negotiating a contract with the Baghdad PC to provide consulting services, such as strategic planning. This engagement is a direct result of their interaction at the EXPO Conference.

GAINING CONSENSUS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROADMAP FROM EXPO AND REFINING THE PLAN AT THE GOVERNORS' CONFERENCES

After the EXPO Conference, in January 2014, GSP/Taqadum convened a review committee meeting of PC and GO leaders from Babil, Baghdad, Diyala, Karbala, and Wasit, and the Ministry of State for Governorates Affairs (MOSGA) to incorporate comments, refine, and endorse the proposed roadmap GSP/Taqadum presented at EXPO. The endorsed consensus roadmap was then presented at the Second Governors Conference Held at Ninawa in February 2014, where governors formally discussed how to implement the second amendment. By the end of the Ninawa

conference, the governors adopted the amended consensus recommendations.

A Third Governor's Conference was held under the auspices of Mr. Ali Mohsen Al-Temimi, Governor of Baghdad, in late February 2014 with assistance from GSP/Taqadum. PC chairs and governors from 12 provinces, members of Parliament, and representatives from the MOSGA, HCCP, Ministry of Planning, Baghdad University, NGOs, and the private sector attended. Participants acknowledged that the recommendations, upon implementation, would help provincial governments better allocate resources and prepare them for their new responsibilities when service delivery is shifted from the ministry to the provincial level. Further, participants expressed their view that GSP/Taqadum is an indispensable partner in strengthening local government and articulated their need for continued support.

MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT OF CAPITAL PROJECTS

As Iraqi provinces work to improve the services that are delivered to citizens, billions of dollars are being invested in capital projects across the country. Once a need has been identified, and the appropriate solution agreed upon, an intricate series of interacting pieces must come together for the desired result. A combination of design, planning, financing, construction, operations, and maintenance are just a few pieces of the puzzle



To help manage the moving parts in monitoring capital projects, GSP/Taqadum developed the Project Information Tracking System (PITS). This database allows users to record information on a project gathered during a site visit, and provides a central location for storing fundamental information, such as the project's cost, the contractors involved, and the duration of the project. PITS saves payment information, notes about each project, and tracks overall progress.

Top: This is the PITS interface, where details are saved for each project.



Bottom: This main interface contains a list of projects. It includes a selection for language and province settings.

for successful implementation and delivery of capital projects. Additionally, to ensure timely completion of quality projects, effective monitoring and oversight is a basic requirement. The absence of this important step has resulted in serious delays, improper budget execution, and poor quality construction.

A fundamental challenge was confusion over the role of pro-

vincial governments in monitoring and oversight versus direct project supervision and follow-up. GSP/Taqadum assisted seven provinces in establishing separate work groups composed of engineers from PCs and GOs, developed clear scopes of work for the teams, and clarified their roles and functions. GSP/Taqadum also developed process maps that were tailored to meet the needs of each province, and cor-



An ESDO team member conducts a rapid scan in the Mukhtar- Al-Hakeem neighborhood with a resident in the Summer Sub-District of Diwaniya in January 2014. ESDO teams distributed many of the 125 rapid scans conducted with GSP/Taqadam through mukhtars. These religious leaders are well positioned to reach deeply into the community to solicit information.

GSP/TAQADUM

responding procedures and tools to build the capacity of the teams to conduct effective site visits to projects, report issues, make recommendations, and follow up on implementation of proposed solutions.

A total of 11 PC Monitoring and GO Oversight work groups were established through an official administrative order in the provinces of Baghdad, Diyala, Babil, Karbala, Salah as-Din, Basrah, and Erbil. Each work group undertook pilot project site visits to better understand the causes of project delays. The work groups used GSP/Taqadam's site inspection checklist and reporting tools to check delayed projects, reported their findings to the PC and GO, and recommended recovery plans. The work being conducted by the provincial work groups has strengthened the role of the PC and GO in their capital projects monitoring and oversight roles.

A BIG TICKET SUCCESS IN WASIT

Based on recommendations from the ESDO team, the governor in Wasit authorized 31 billion IQD (about \$25 million) for the purchase of heavy machinery such as trash pick-up, filling potholes, and improving sewerage. At the time of this report, some items for this purchase have been procured and delivered, and the remaining procurements are underway.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE DELIVERY OVERSIGHT (ESDO)/ SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Through GSP/Taqadam's ESDO activities, PCs and GOs, with the participation of service delivery directorates, were able to use hard data to drive improvements in service delivery. ESDO working groups (see Activity Spotlight) conducted site visits and surveys to measure, test, and collect data on different services and compare that data with what the services should be based on established Iraqi standards for each service department. After analysis and identifying gaps, ESDO teams were able to use data-driven evidence to recommend improvements in services.

This data-driven approach was a significant success under GSP/Taqadam. By removing subjectivity from service delivery, ESDO working groups were able to unify various government departments and officials through the shared task of concretely improving services for residents.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN ERBIL'S GO

With a scope addition in September 2013, GSP/Taqadam was able to meet specific needs of the Erbil GO. In addition to project maintenance and operations and OSTP training, GSP/Taqadam trained 50 engineers in International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) standards and project site management, and trained 26 district and sub-district managers on leadership, decision-making, project prioritization, communication, and conflict management.

All parties could share in these successes. These victories were often not lost on citizens either. In the Hakim neighborhood in Wasit, one citizen is reported as saying, "I can't believe that all local officials are here just to test my water." Local governments received recognition for service improvements, while citizens benefited directly.

Activity Spotlight: Seeing — and fixing — the problem. One of the benefits of the ESDO model is its ability to identify and implement immediate, short-term, and long-term solutions. For example, in one area of Wasit, the ESDO working group responded to numerous complaints through the CSD about quality and quantity of water. A site visit and tests revealed a defect in the chlorine levels and illegal water usage by factories and companies. Because the water department manager was there for the site

visit, the working group was able to immediately halt the illegal tapping. Following this, the local government provided water tankers to supply the proper quality of water. For a long-term solution, a water plant was included in the 2014 PPL. The plant is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2014.

Lessons learned. When GSP/Taqadam first launched ESDO units throughout Iraq, the team frequently discovered there were officials from both PC and GO offices who were concerned ESDO would confuse authorities, tasks, and orders, and remove responsibility from respective divisions. In the eyes of some, it was impossible to mix the monitoring role of PCs with the oversight roles of GOs. It took time and effort to convince all parties of the benefits of the collaborative nature of ESDO, and arrive at a mutually accept-

A PC SERVICE COMMITTEE RESPONDS TO CITIZEN COMPLAINT

BEFORE ESDO	AFTER ESDO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complaint is received 2. Service Committee gathers information concerning the complaint 3. Service Committee visits the implicated area 4. Service Committee drafts report and submits report to the PC Chair 5. PC Chair sends the report to the Governor/ Service Department 6. Governor/Service Department checks the information by performing a site visit 7. Service Department drafts report with recommendations on how to address the complaint in the short term or long term (with ARDP funds) 8. Service Department sends the report to the Governor's Office who sends it to the PC Chair 9. PC Chair sends the report to the Service Committee 10. Service Committee follows up on the actions to address the complaint 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complaint is received 2. Service Committee, Governor's Office, and Service Department visit the area together 3. Problems/deficiencies are identified 4. Service Department is authorized to fix the problem 5. If the problem requires a: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Short term solution (addressed immediately by the Service Department) b. Long term solution (requires ARDP funds) 6. Service Committee follows up and communicates on the action taken

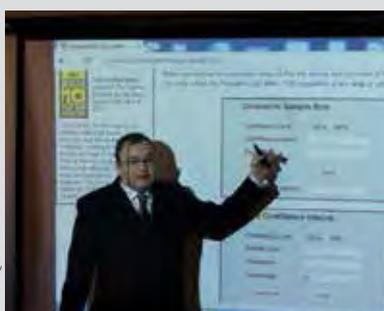
SNAPSHOT

Iraqi Government and Civil Society Collaborate to Support Gender-Sensitive Budgeting



GSPTAQADUM

The first provincial-level public meeting in Baghdad attracted 143 participants in February of 2013.



GSPTAQADUM

GSP/Taqadum's Public Service Oversight Advisor, Alaa Al-Hakak, introduced ESDO workshop participants to more advanced survey techniques in March of 2014.

Citizens a "Pillar" in Local Government in Baghdad

" The participation of citizens in decision-making is the most important pillar of the local government and one of the most important ways to promote democracy."

-Mr. Ali Banyan, Baghdad Provincial Council Chair Representative

The Iraq Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, facilitated the Baghdad Provincial Council's (PC) first citizen participation meeting in February 2013, bringing together 143 representatives from the media, local district councils, civil society, NGOs, and tribal leaders. The meeting, which registered the highest attendance for a provincial meeting since the 2009 local election, was held in response to the recently passed Citizen Participation Law, which GSP/Taqadum supported by reviewing the draft legislation with the Baghdad PC.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to best generate and incorporate citizen feedback into everyday decision-making. Attendees decided to publish a booklet on the Citizen Participation Law, the importance of citizen engagement in local government, and how to get involved. The booklet has since been distributed to citizens through district councils, government entities, and schools. Educating youth on the importance of citizen participation was particularly important to the group. They noted that educating Iraqi youth is the first step in developing a new generation of democratic citizen activists.

Participants also discussed establishing service delivery performance standards (SDPS) with technical support from GSP/Taqadum. SDP standards are intended to hold local governments accountable to citizens for the quality and delivery of basic services.

Since the inception of the first essential service delivery oversight (ESDO) unit, GSP/Taqadum has established ESDO units in 10 target provinces. Provincial governments and directorates have worked together to improve water, sewer, and storm water services and trash collection in underserved neighborhoods throughout Iraq.

In March 2014, 56 officials from 10 provinces participated in a two-day workshop to adopt the ESDO staff manual and system database. The ESDO manual and database will augment the application of ESDO units' SDPS and citizen rapid scan survey techniques. As part of GSP/Taqadum's legacy, the ESDO database will be used for better management of data, accessibility of data for timely decision-making, survey analysis, and identification of service delivery gaps, and for more effective reporting.

able working arrangement. In some cases, securing buy-in took as long as four months. The success of an ESDO was frequently determined by the level of cooperation, commitment, and the degree of harmony and cooperation between the PC and GO of that province. Frequently where there was strong GO buy-in, there were better results, such as in Najaf.

Six provinces — Diwaniyah, Diyala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Najaf, and Wasit — have appended their respective ESDO work group to the organizational structure of the GO, essentially institutionalizing these work groups into units of local government. Each of these units will be appropriately staffed, provided with space, management oversight, and an operating budget.

CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEYS (CSS)

To be effective, government must deliver services citizens need, want, and expect. The long history of wars and sanctions in Iraq left public service delivery in a dismal state. Since 2003, Iraq has been struggling to improve those services. CSS is an important tool in that improvement initiative. It asks citizens to rate the services delivered and it lets government know if they are meeting expectations. In conducting the CSS on two occasions, it was noted that the survey enumerators were well received by the public who were pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the survey questions. Additionally, the act of surveying strengthens the bond

between provincial governments and citizens and increases its legitimacy. Citizens were pleased to have the opportunity to share their opinions with their elected officials. Reviewing survey reports allows officials to hear a greater variety of citizen voices than can be achieved in a public or council meeting, and the aggregation of the results provides officials with a sense of direction and purpose.

GSP/Taqadum conducted an initial CSS in 2012, and repeated the survey in 2013 in an expanded format that reached 15,250 citizens. Both surveys were conducted using a rapid appraisal tool, but the 2013 effort directly involved provincial staff as ‘tag-alongs’ and provided training in survey design, execution, analysis, reporting, and actual field enumeration work. The 2013 CSS results were expanded to be customized by province and used as training materials for PC service committee chairs. These chairs subsequently presented results to governorate officials in 14 provinces, giving them a better understanding of the perceptions of citizens toward service delivery.

Because of GSP/Taqadum’s technical assistance in 2013, PC and GO staff in the provinces acquired new skills in preparing, conducting, and analyzing survey results. Even if these provinces choose not to conduct their own surveys, they now understand the benefit of surveys in collecting public inputs and have the capacity to select an appropriate survey provider.

CSS END STATE:

Provinces understand the value of asking citizens about services they receive and know how to use that information to measure government performance. Provincial staff have learned how to formulate, administer, analyze, and report survey results, and can conduct or contract for quality surveys.

SNAPSHOT

Public Alerted to Unhealthy Water in Karbala



GSP/TAQADUM

The Karbala ESDO unit conducts a field test in the Al-Gatheer neighborhood in Karbala. Excessive water turbidity at the Al-Orobah water transfer station was discovered, documented, and reported.



GSP/TAQADUM

The Babil ESDO unit conducts a site visit to a Babil storm water drainage plant.

In Karbala province, the Chair of the Provincial Council's Water and Sewage Committee, Mr. Haider Al-Khanjar, knew something was wrong with the water. It didn't look right, it didn't smell right, and most of all, it tasted terrible. When he had it tested, Mr. Al-Khanjar was shocked to find out the water was highly turbid, muddied with sediment and foreign particles.

Mr. Al-Khanjar promptly alerted the public to this potential health threat by posting on his official Facebook page: "Here, I want to put this issue for your consideration since it is most related to citizens' lives [...] lack of alum or use of expired alum in water treatment is contributing to high turbidity levels that reduce the overall effectiveness of chlorine. Labs confirm positive bacteriological and chemical tests." Alum gathers small particles in the water into a mass that settles to the bottom where it can be removed before the water is treated with chlorine. If the alum expires, it begins to lose its chemical properties and the small particles remain, carrying toxic microorganisms that can cause gastroenteritis, a stomach-irritating bacterial infection that had been recently affecting a portion of the Karbala population.

Khanjar also contacted the Karbala Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) unit, a group formed with assistance and training from UASAIID's Governance Strengthening Project, GSP/Taqadum. The unit then formally tested water at varying locations around the province and confirmed Mr. Al-Khanjar's findings. When the unit sent a water sample to the Iraqi National Laboratory for testing, however, the Department of Water refused to test the new sample, and instead offered the results of old tests conducted when the alum in question was still valid. (The Ministry of Health and Karbala Health Directorate have since sent correspondence regarding the bacterial and chemical test failures to the Prime Minister's office.)

Until the problem is addressed, Mr. Al-Khanjar hopes that through his Facebook public notice, citizens consume only potable water. Luckily, Mr. Al-Khanjar's posting has since prompted the Babil ESDO unit to conduct two site visits to Babil's storm water drainage plants, which collect storm water for disposal in the Hilla River and Yahudiyah Stream. The unit found that the storm water was mixed with sewage, and is taking appropriate steps to fix the problem.

GSP/Taqadum had initially planned to conduct a CSS in 2014. However, due to the truncated program year (2014) and equally, the onset of national elections, the CSS for 2014 was cancelled. Additionally, since the most recent survey was completed in September 2013, the project reasoned that conducting the same survey less than six months later would not provide provincial officials with substantially different information on citizens' perceptions of public service and service delivery.

CITIZEN SERVICE DESKS

Addressing the needs and concerns of citizens is a powerful and positive demonstration that citizen voices are heard and heeded by decision-makers. Citizen Service Desks (CSDs) collect issues brought forward by citizens and act as an interface between citizens and local government. GSP/Taqadum has worked with CSDs in 15 provinces to enhance the performance of previously existing GO CSDs, and to establish new desks in PCs that previously had no CSD. A major contribution of GSP/Taqadum's CSD support was the Issue Tracking and Reporting System (ITRS), an electronic tool to record citizen issues, track progress on addressing the issues, sort information to facilitate analysis, and produce summary reports for decision-makers. Reports from the ITRS provide documented evidence of citizen needs that can guide ESDO units in identifying service delivery gaps, and be used by PPDCs, GOs, and PCs to formulate provincial plans and budgets. In total, 10 provinces

produced 89 automated reports off the ITRS application.

GSP/Taqadum trained managers on how to use the reports as management and policy tools. By glancing at the summaries, CSD managers can understand workload, time and day of requests, and other variables that can help them more efficiently deploy their staff. Policymakers can quickly see areas of need by tracking the originating district of the issues reported and the sectors of greatest concern reported by citizens. The responsiveness and performance of ministry directorates can be monitored by viewing the average number of days elapsed until the ministry first responds and the average numbers of days until issues are resolved. GSP/Taqadum also coordinated with the Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC) to provide hotlines with four-digit phone numbers at PC CSDs, making it easier for citizens to reach CSD staff. Several provinces advertised the hotlines on TV and street bulletin boards. As a result of GSP/Taqadum assistance in Diyala, a large flow chart was posted by the PC at the entrance of the building showing the process for citizens to launch complaints.

A key contribution of GSP/Taqadum's CSD support was the Issue Tracking and Reporting System (ITRS), an electronic tool to record citizen issues, track progress on addressing the issues, sort information to facilitate analysis, and produce summary reports for decision-makers. Reports from the ITRS provide documented

CSD END STATE:

As a result of GSP/Taqadum interventions, and in cooperation with COMSEC, 10 provinces now use an automated system to record citizen issues, analyze data, and produce reports that drive responsive service delivery and develop better plans and budgets.

ITRS case files archiving interface



Total cases viewed in ITRS

رقم القضية	مصدر القضية	تاريخ التقرير	الجهة المسؤولة
2	مصدر القضية	4/8/2013	مصدر القضية
3	مصدر القضية	13/30/2013	مصدر القضية
4	مصدر القضية	4/1/2013	مصدر القضية
5	مصدر القضية	4/2/2013	مصدر القضية
6	مصدر القضية	4/8/2013	مصدر القضية

evidence of citizen needs that can guide ESDO units in identifying service delivery gaps, and be used by PPDCs, GOs, and PCs to formulate provincial plans and budgets.

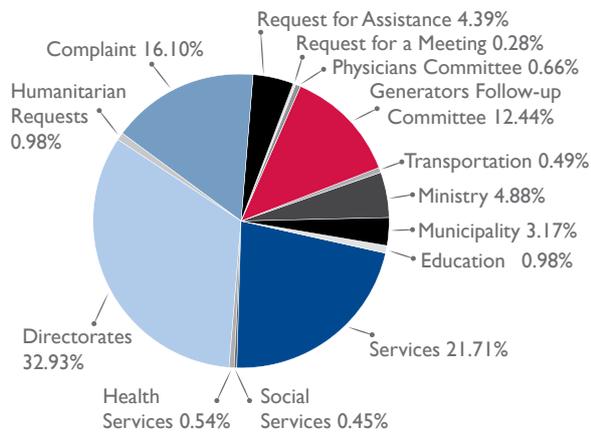
GSP/Taqadum's technical assistance to CSD managers and staff in 15 provinces has improved the management of the CSDs, automated processes by implementing the ITRS database application to record and analyze citizen issues, and led provinces to accept coherent standard operating procedures.

Understanding and using ITRS reports. As CSDs became better acquainted with the data entry and reporting portions of the ITRS, they also became more interested in understanding the reports and how they could better use the data to inform the decision-making process. The summary ITRS automated reports include tables and charts that allow the reader to understand the status of citizen issues in the province quickly. Graphics summarizing citizen issues by sector, the location of issues by district, the proportion of issues

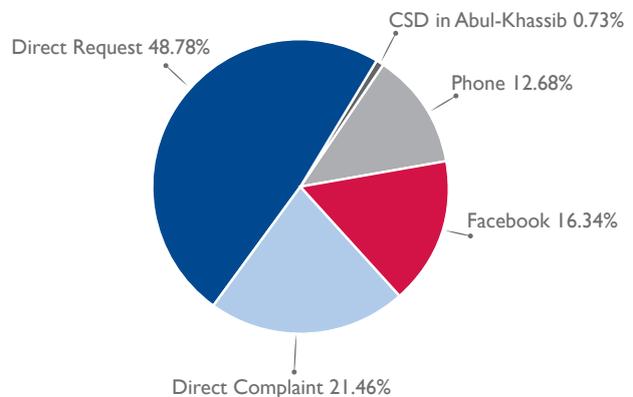
that have been resolved (closed), etc., are automated and available in the system. Auxiliary reports with the detail of each entry are also automated and available as necessary. GSP/Taqadam trained managers on how to use the reports as management and policy tools. By glancing at the summaries, CSD managers can understand workload, time and day of requests, and other variables that can help them more efficiently deploy their staff. Policymakers can quickly see areas of need by tracking the originating district of the issues reported and the sectors of greatest concern reported by citizens. The responsiveness and performance of ministry directorates can be monitored by viewing the average number of days elapsed until the ministry first responds and the average numbers of days until issues are resolved.

Tools to support sustainability. GSP/Taqadam produced three important legacy documents to sustain the accomplishments of this activity. First, a Customer Service Improvement and CSD Management Techniques publication was distributed in GSP/Taqadam's Customer Service workshops for CSD managers. Second, a CSD Manual with emphasis on ITRS, developed in cooperation with COMSEC, was distributed to CSDs across Iraq. Finally, a citizen guide containing CSD contact information for citizens, produced in cooperation with COMSEC, was distributed to CSDs, NGOs, legal clinics, GOI offices, PCs, and GOs across the country for public dissemination.

TOPICS OF COMPLAINTS



SOURCE OF COMPLAINTS



SLIT END STATE:

Using the database developed by GSP/Taqadam, 11 provinces are archiving PC-enacted laws and decisions and tracking them to ensure implementation. Trained PC legal staff now have improved drafting skills to produce sub-legislation that is clear and does not conflict with other laws, thus allowing it to be implemented.

SUB-LEGISLATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING (SLIT) SYSTEM

Provincial councils pass orders, rules, regulations, and other types of legislation by the authority granted to them under Law 21 and strengthened by its amendments. If laws are enacted but not implemented, the authority and legitimacy of provincial government is undercut. Thereafter, the implementation of enacted legislation becomes the responsibility of the GO, in its capacity as the provincial executive. However, if legislation is not well drafted, exceeds the authority granted to the province, or is not properly enacted, it cannot be implemented. GSP/Taqadam's Sub-legislative Implementation Tracking (SLIT) activity assisted provinces in resolving serious problems through three initiatives: 1) GSP/Taqadam helped provinces map the current legislative enactment and implementation process, analyze it, and recommend process improvements; 2) developed the SLIT database as a sustainable tool

for provincial officials to archive legislation and produce regular reports on the implementation status of enacted legislation for appropriate decision maker action; and 3) provided training on the legislative processes including legislative drafting.

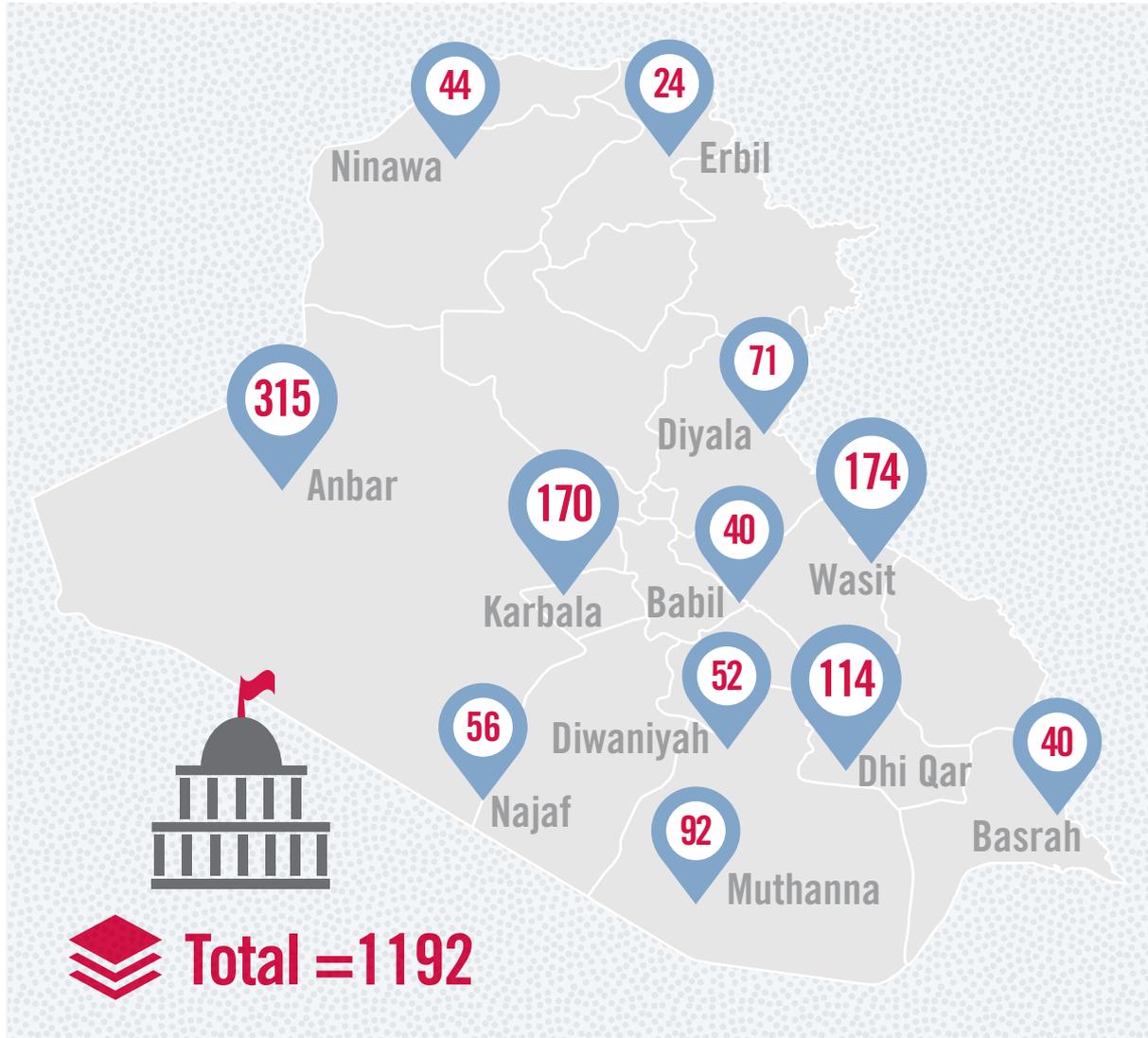
SLIT reports prompt questions and drive action to correct non-implementation. GSP/Taqadam built the capacity of SLIT work groups to enter and archive PC decisions. The system now serves as a legislative archive and generates implementation tracking reports in 11 provinces. As the archives were populated and reports were generated, questions arose regarding unimplemented legislation. Inquiries were sent to GOs asking for reasons why specific PC legislation had not been implemented, triggering a series of actions to address the inquiries. For example, the Ninawa council discovered that PC Decision Number 7 of 2013 had not been implemented. The decision concerned employees in the Mosul Municipality. It maintains that the time served by these

SLIT database directory browser



التصنيف	رقم القرار	تاريخ القرار	المؤممع	التعليق
قرار	1	30/12/2013	قرار 1	غير تنفيذ
قانون	2	28/09/2013	قرار 2	غير تنفيذ
قرار	3	29/09/2013	قرار 3	غير تنفيذ

**NUMBER OF LAWS AND DECISIONS
ENTERED INTO SLIT ARCHIVE AS OF JUNE 30, 2014**



employees as contractors before becoming permanent employees should be included when calculating compensation and retirement. When the PC realized that the municipality had not implemented their decision they sent an official letter to the governor requesting that the managers of Mosul Municipality and Ninawa Municipalities be removed if they refused to implement the PC's decision. The matter was quickly resolved, in accordance with the PC directive, shortly thereafter.

In terms of sustainability, SLIT units were institutionalized within the PC structure with designated financial, physical, operational, and human resources in the provinces of Anbar, Babil, Basrah, Diwaniya, Najaf, and Wasit. Additionally, the SLIT manual, Electronic System to Archive and Track Sub-legislation, was printed and distributed to legal committees, GOs, and SLIT units or work groups in 15 provinces.

SNAPSHOT

Women's Contributions Drive Provincial Project and Service Delivery Priorities



GSP/TAQADUM

Female participants at the Regional Gender Workshop in Basra developing a project priority list.

“ When we talk about gender, we should consider three important issues: women’s contributions to the decision-making process, opportunities to create jobs for women, and [increasing] women’s income.” -Mrs. Azhar Al-Turaihi, Najaf Provincial Council member

The Government of Iraq identified challenges to their ability to improve delivery of basic services to Iraqi citizens (50 percent of whom are women) as one of their greatest risks to social stability. Nevertheless, women’s community priorities at the local level are often under-represented in Iraqi provincial development strategy sessions and budget allocations.

Over the past 10 years, there have been a numerous workshops and training efforts designed to raise awareness of gender issues. The Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, is taking the next step by educating women about the provincial government processes that dictate service delivery priorities, then providing them with the tools to affect change, influence local government policy decisions, and exercise oversight.

Throughout February and March of 2013, GSP/Taqadum held workshops across Iraq on one tool in particular, the Project Priority List (PPL). Provincial councils (PCs), governor’s offices (GOs), and Provincial Planning and Development Councils (PPDCs) use PPLs to prioritize province-supported activities during the provincial planning and budgeting process. GSP/Taqadum held PPL workshops in Baghdad, Najaf, Erbil, and Basrah, bringing together 184 women and 75 men, including community activists, female PC members, the State Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and representatives from GOs, NGOs, and district councils.

The primary purpose of the workshops was to develop province-based, gender-specific PPLs. During each session, women discussed and voted on their communities’ spending priorities. The final gender based PPLs called for vocational training and increased job opportunities for women, women’s health centers, and space and cultural facilities for women. The developed PPLs will be submitted to the PPDC in each province for consideration in the 2014 provincial budget.

As a result of the workshops, women are now educated on local government processes, including the importance of oversight. Taking ownership of the gender-specific PPLs, women are now empowered to follow up with their local leaders to ensure their priorities are reflected in provincial planning and expenditures. A citizen-oriented management approach to public administration is only realized when women play an active role in defining and monitoring provincial spending priorities.

CHAPTER THREE

CROSSCUTTING INITIATIVES

NGOS BEFORE AND AFTER

Prior to GSP/Taqadam interventions, NGOs did not fully understand the budget cycle and how to ensure their ideas were considered and funded. After professional mentoring to increase their understanding of the planning process and budget cycle, NGOs understood that timing is critical to ensuring inclusion in the provincial budgets.

WORKING WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

By working with NGOs, GSP/Taqadam sought options to address the needs of niche segments, in this case, vulnerable populations. GSP/Taqadam focused on building the capacity of select NGOs to prepare them to participate in the provincial resource allocation process including linking them to the PPDCs. There was a strong need to build skills to bring issues to the table and ensure funding. To this end, in December 2013 GSP/Taqadam conducted training for 30 NGOs focused on topics such as cost analysis, writing a detailed project proposal, developing clearly defined proposal objectives, and outlining proposal outcomes. The workshops also focused on how to identify the needs of vulnerable groups, how to prioritize these needs according to certain criteria, and

how to find a formal mechanism to address these needs with PPDCs. These NGOs were also introduced to the planning and budgeting cycle to better understand the most efficient way to submit project ideas and help ensure funding by getting their ideas included in the provincial budget.

Activity Spotlight: NGOs as monitoring and oversight partners. The NGO Workshop in November 2012 focused on the role of NGOs and their citizen members as monitors of government projects and programs. Engaging citizens as monitoring partners expands the geographic feedback footprint government receives on its work. Citizens can monitor the progress of construction and other government projects and services, and be educated to know that they have a right to information and a right to be heard.

A SUSTAINABLE STORY: NGOS IN DIWANIYA

Following the work Taqadam did with NGOs, organizations in at least one province, Diwaniya, secured funding to hold forums and meetings on their own without Taqadam assistance. The NGOs also initiated a Facebook page to remain in touch and share best practices. Finally, the NGOs also established a formal mechanism with the PPDCs and presented their PPLs to this body.

To better impact NGO outcomes with local government, GSP/Taqadam also offered a broad training curriculum to NGOs on conducting effective public meetings, and developing cooperation and synergies with other NGOs. Training extended beyond just these technical skills: there was also a focus on explaining the budgetary process, a visioning process for identifying future interventions, how policy is made at the provincial level, and the role of NGOs in these provincial processes. The training sessions were well received; in particular, participants greatly benefitted from learning the visioning process to anticipate future actions and to better prepare for such eventualities. By the following month, these NGOs were conducting their own public meetings and putting into practice more advanced methods for accessing provincial resources.

Activity Spotlight: Engaging nontraditional nongovernment partners. As part of the ESDO process, rapid scans or short surveys are conducted in targeted, underserved neighborhoods to measure the actual level of service delivery in basic services for water, sewer, solid waste, and storm drainage, and to solicit citizen input on needs and solutions. ESDO teams distributed many of the 125 rapid scans conducted with GSP/Taqadam assistance over the past 18 months through mukhtars. These religious leaders made excellent partners. They are well positioned to reach widely and deeply into the community to solicit information, have an

interest in community development, and represent a sustained presence that can be used again in subsequent surveys and rapid scans.

Despite these significant interventions to improve capacity, a number of weaknesses remain. NGOs still lack skills in internal capacities for managing and running their organizations, and securing sufficient funding remains a challenge. Many of these NGOs could benefit from additional professional mentoring, especially in how to be effective community leaders and change agents.

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

As GSP/Taqadam worked to build the capacity of local government officials to effectively provide equal access to services and representation to underserved populations, the project's assistance to vulnerable and underserved populations was largely indirect: GSP/Taqadam built the capacity of governments, which in turn provided specific and improved services to these groups.

Gender-inclusive interventions. Project staff worked to find and encourage female government officials to participate in GSP/Taqadam interventions. The project was largely successful in exceeding its annual targets for female participation through organizing female-specific events and interventions. In early 2013, GSP/Taqadam staff worked with



Women representatives from the Karbala women's PC committee attended the GSP/ Taqadum National Conference on Developing Local Legislation to Stop Violence against Women.

GSP/TAQADUM

Female Officials Participating in GSP/Taqadum Interventions, 2012 to 2014		
Program Year	PMP Target	Actual
2012	60	68
2013	63	85
2014	63	86
TOTAL	186	239

PC members and representatives from local NGOs to organize the first-ever gender-specific PPLs for all 15 provinces. GSP/ Taqadum hosted four regional workshops attended by 259 participants, of whom 184 were women. Female participants from each province developed PPLs for their respective provinces. The PPLs reflected a female bias and included projects for vocational training for women, projects to increase job opportunities for women, women's health centers, specialized centers for disabled kids, and sports and cultural facilities for women. GSP/ Taqadum also hosted a major conference in

Najaf on gender standards and gender-responsive budgeting that was attended by Dr. Bushra Zweini, Gender Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office. The event was designed to increase awareness about gender issues, discuss lack of gender policies and their application in Iraq, and encourage female government members to advocate for gender standards. In March 2014, GSP/ Taqadum organized a conference in Karbala on developing legislation at the local level to stop violence against women. Project staff received feedback from participants and drafted an initial version that has been handed over to a local NGO to continue with its development and passage. The project also initiated a monthly gender newsletter to further engage Iraqi women in leadership and support positions in the PCs, GOs, and local organizations and share the latest local and international gender-related news. Targeted workshops helped increase awareness about gender issues, discuss lack of gender policies and their application in Iraq, and encourage female gov-

SNAPSHOT

Local Governments and Citizens Engage at Public Meetings



GSP/TAQADUM

Citizens from the Abu Ghraib District in Baghdad participate in an exercise to identify priority projects for their community in 2014.



GSP/TAQADUM

Orphans and disabled children participate in identifying their priority needs.

The gathering of citizens at the town hall in the Abu Ghraib District of Baghdad was remarkable for several reasons. First, despite security concerns, 87 men and women were eagerly crowded into the meeting room. More notable was the reason they were there. For the first time in the district, citizens had the opportunity to participate in a dialogue with local government officials to define their top priorities for the coming year.

Years of conflict and corruption within Iraq has left the government divided from its people. As a result, the central government and local councils are out of touch with community needs. However, with support from the USAID-funded Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, local governments are now engaging in community outreach and encouraging citizen participation through the facilitation of public meetings.

Working closely with local officials, GSP/Taqadum has facilitated 60 public meetings with districts from all 15 federal provinces. A variety of citizens and government officials attend the public meetings, including mayors, district council chairs, directors of departments of water, sewer, agriculture, power, and municipalities, tribal leaders, sheikhs, farmers, laborers, academics, students, teachers, and retirees.

Government-citizen collaboration at public meetings helps prioritize and develop community needs. In the Kadhimiya District, citizen attendees prioritized the opening of new schools. In Diwaniyah, the Iraqi Independent Organization for Human Rights conducted a public meeting that identified priority projects focused on relieving unemployment and promoting education. In Diwaniyah, a public meeting hosted by the Yad Al-Waffa Organization for Orphans and the Disabled identified the construction of a clinic center and sports hall for the handicapped as a top priority. Other districts identified health services, electricity, or sewage as their top priorities. The priority lists developed during the meetings are sent to the districts' Provincial Councils, enabling strategic planning of their budgets and activities for the following year.

Local governments gain credibility in the eyes of their citizens when they hold public meetings and provide a space for open and honest dialogue. Ultimately, with a clearer understanding of their constituencies, local officials are better able to serve citizen needs.

ernment members to advocate for gender standards.

Reaching vulnerable populations. As part of the project's OSTP activities, GSP/Taqadum was also able to directly impact other underserved populations. For example, the Babil GO OSTP team adopted transformational improvements that directly affect underserved groups. One such solution was to address the needs of terrorism victims, which

resulted in the expedited resolution of 150 cases and compensation payments to the victims or their families. This success set an example for national-level efforts to duplicate the process across all the provinces. Vulnerable populations in underserved neighborhoods are also benefitting from GSP/Taqadum's service delivery initiatives, as site visits by ESDO units identified performance gaps and resulted in short- and long-term solutions in these areas.



The Ninawah governor's assistant for Planning at the GSP/Taqadum PPDC capacity-building workshop.

GSP/TAQADUM

SNAPSHOT

Government, Civil Society Support Gender-Sensitive Budgeting



Breakout sessions at the First National Conference on Women's Leadership in Gender-Responsive Budgeting.

The Najaf Provincial Council Chair (PC) and Najaf Governor welcomed central ministry officials, female PC members from 13 provinces, representatives from civil society organizations, USAID and UN representatives, women's advocates, and USAID's Governance Strengthening Project (GSP/Taqadum) staff for the landmark First National Conference on Women's Leadership in Gender-Responsive Budgeting. A primary goal of the October 2013 conference, organized by GSP/Taqadum, was to create a realistic near-term roadmap to improve gender-sensitive allocation of national resources. Dr. Bushra Zweini, the Prime Minister's Advisor for Women's Issues, expressed the importance of developing a roadmap:

"...national duty calls upon us to adopt a unified road map through which we can raise awareness on linking the concept of gender to sustainable development in order to reduce social disparities."

Throughout the two-day conference, participants broke into working groups and outlined the major challenges to gender integration in public budgeting. The working groups provided recommendations for more effective implementation of gender standards in response to each challenge. One of the primary challenges highlighted by participants was a lack of knowledge about gender-related issues among female leaders and decision makers. Participants recommended offering capacity building for female leaders in government so that they may more actively support gender-responsive budgeting initiatives.

The conference also facilitated the creation of Iraq's first National Gender Network, which will lead the effort to advocate for gender standards in local government and the broader public domain. The establishment of the network is a critical step toward ensuring the implementation of conference recommendations and continuing the conversation of gender standards in local government.

For the past two years, GSP/Taqadum has vigorously promoted the participation of women in activities traditionally dominated by men in Iraqi society, such as public meetings in rural areas. GSP/Taqadum has held regional workshops covering 15 provinces to increase awareness about gender issues, discuss the lack of application of gender policies in Iraq, and to encourage female provincial council members to advocate for gender standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOVING FORWARD, SUSTAINABLY: GSP/ TAQADUM'S LEGACY

For nearly three years, GSP/Taqadum presented provincial governments with focused interventions for the provision of a wide range of public services and the systems to deliver them. Some provinces consider GSP/Taqadum activities impossible to replace. When a foreign aid project closes down without ensuring that its best practices are available for continuation, it leaves ill-equipped local provincial governments or under-resourced organizations to meet citizens' needs and fill the gap of terminated services. With this in mind, GSP/Taqadum mindfully and purposefully structured its programmatic activities to ensure that after the project ends, progress in these areas will continue.

CONTINUALLY BUILDING CAPACITY

GSP/Taqadum's capacity building approach lends itself to being self-sustainable. With PC and GO staff turnover at more than

70 percent after the 2013 provincial elections, the sustainability of GSP/Taqadum interventions is especially relevant. The term of a provincial council or governor's office staff is only four years — just long enough to properly prepare staff and officers to perform important functions designed to make a province operate smoothly. Because capacity building is crucial to keeping a province in operation, it made sense that any closeout strategy developed for GSP/Taqadum be designed to transfer our knowledge and strategies after project closeout. Through innovative systems and effective methodologies, GSP/Taqadum developed the means by which continued learning and service provision can occur in post-project provincial governments. This transfer of GSP/Taqadum technologies, know-how, and standardized systems to existing and new governments

SNAPSHOT

Local Government at Work for Babil Citizens



GSPTAQADUM

A family in the under-served neighborhood of Al-Askary receives one of 750 trash receptacles distributed after GSP/Taqadum's ESDO intervention in Babil province.



GSPTAQADUM

The Water Department in Babil is expanding the potable water network to include another 86 houses.

In the Babil neighborhood of Al-Askary, Hillah province, citizens suffer from poor to no delivery of basic services for water, wastewater, and solid waste. This is true for many Iraqi citizens.

Through the essential service delivery oversight (ESDO) initiative, the Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, is helping local governments respond to community needs with quality solutions, elevating citizen confidence in local government and empowering local officials to exercise municipal government oversight. ESDO units bring together representatives from a cross section of local government stakeholders including representatives from the public, provincial councils, the governor's office, and the Director General of Citizen Affairs to establish Service Delivery Performance Standards (SDPSs), assess citizen needs, and improve public services.

With assistance from GSP/Taqadum, the Babil ESDO unit conducted a field test and rapid citizen scan in February 2013, revealing two critical service deficiencies: 1) 95 percent did not have ready access to running water and 2) none of the 4,250 households in the neighborhood had trash receptacles, resulting in a littered, unhealthy neighborhood. The Babil ESDO unit brought these citizen needs to municipal authorities, who took action.

The Water Department responded by expanding the potable water network to include another 86 houses in the neighborhood. The municipality has distributed 750 trash receptacles in three of four areas of Al-Askary, and nearby neighborhoods are receiving increased attention and service.

Muhammed Hassen, owner of a small shop near the new water network, explained that they had "requested this project [for a] long time. [W]e went to the official departments but [received] no response... Now we are very happy to get the water connection in our houses."

On March 25, 2013, ESDO members from the Babil Governor's Office met again with citizens. As a result, the Municipality Department instructed all municipal branches in districts and sub-districts to establish a citizen service desk to receive and respond to citizen's complaints and requests. The department also allocated resources and developed a form for recording citizens' complaints. Through GSP/Taqadum's interventions, provincial governments and directorates have worked together in 10 provinces to improve service delivery in under-served neighborhoods in Iraq.

ensures its relevance for replication and sustainability.

CYCLICAL REASSESSMENT

The OSTP methodology is grounded in sustainable continuous improvement. All eight OSTP teams have been through one learning and improvement cycle and are now able to conduct the next set of organization assessments and implementation of solutions on their own. Additionally, the OSTP Excellence Network brings practitioners from the eight provinces together to share solutions, experiences, challenges, and to learn from each other. These actions reinforce the continuous learning premium that is synonymous with OSTP and bolsters GSP/Taqadam's legacy.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The PPDCs were formed based on a directive from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Planning. While GSP/Taqadam helped initiate, formalize, organize, and build the capacity of PPDCs, this body has in the last four months of programming activities advanced its work with minimal assistance from the project. The formation of a PPDC High Commission was planned but did not materialize due to disruptions caused by national elections. Nevertheless, GSP/Taqadam has provided MOSGA with all the information needed to establish such a body and will continue to watch for its creation. The formation of the High Commission further

strengthens the sustainability and relevance of the PPDC and harmonizes national-level planning strategies, developments that would fortify the GSP/Taqadam legacy.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

GSP/Taqadam's approach to building capacity involved facilitating the creation of officially nominated province-level teams or work groups to deliver projects interventions. Some of these teams or work groups eventually transitioned to institutionalized units of local government (see next paragraph). These augmented structures include: OSTP teams, PPDC, Citizen Participation Units, Monitoring and Oversight work groups, ESDO work groups, CSD teams, and SLIT work groups. The membership of these work groups or teams largely remained the same during the course of the project and as a result, GSP/Taqadam was able to provide technical assistance that had considerable depth. Each work group or team developed an annual work plan to guide its work for the current year, ensuring that it stayed visible and relevant despite the absence of support from GSP/Taqadam.

INSTITUTIONALIZED UNITS

Institutionalization of the aforementioned province-level work groups or teams occurs when they transition to become units of local government that are fully funded with dedicated staff, space, and an operating budget.

SNAPSHOT

Najaf Government Looks, Listens, and Acts



GSP/TAQADUM

Najaf Public Works Municipal Directorate workers deliver new trashcans to Najaf citizens.



GSP/TAQADUM

Najaf's Al-Askary neighborhood before cleanup.



GSP/TAQADUM

Najaf's Al-Askary neighborhood after cleanup.

Uncollected garbage has plagued the underserved neighborhoods in Najaf Province for as long as anyone can remember. So it was not surprising when the Najaf Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) unit, formed with the assistance of the Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, polled neighborhoods in Najaf, including the underserved Al-Askari neighborhood, and found that the quality of trash collection was the number one issue for citizens.

During the war, one of the first civic responsibilities to be abandoned was trash collection. Professional trash collectors soon found it too dangerous to do their jobs. Since that time, organized trash collection services never properly rebounded, particularly in underserved neighborhoods. When the GSP/Taqadum-initiated ESDO teams in the provinces began their site visits, trash collection service was among the first service delivery gaps addressed.

Based on its site visit to the Al-Askari neighborhood and three others, the Najaf ESDO unit recommended the province buy trash receptacles, providing citizens a specific place to put their trash. The Governor of Najaf then allocated approximately \$65,000 to purchase 3,000 trash receptacles, with 250 receptacles going directly to Al-Askari through its Municipal Directorate.

As a result of GSP/Taqadum's interventions, provincial governments and directorates have worked together in each of the 10 targeted provinces to improve water, sewer, storm water, and trash collection services in underserved neighborhoods. ESDO recommendations focus on quick actions to address service gaps while planning for permanent solutions for sustainability.

Six provincial ESDO and six SLIT work groups were fully institutionalized by the close of project activities. Additionally, four provinces passed citizen participation laws and, by default, acquired Citizen Participation Units as a condition of passing this legislation. Collectively, these institutionalized units are part of the sustainability premise of GSP/Taqadam's work.

CITIZENS MATTER

The capacity of local government to reach out to citizens and to involve them in identifying priorities and plans builds trust and solidifies the relationship between citizens and government officials. Citizen participation and trust in provincial governance processes also enable an environment of transparency and accountability by allowing constituents to interface directly with their local government representatives and communicate the needs and priorities of their communities. GSP/Taqadam helped strengthen these relationships and now that more formal and transparent communications are in place, citizens have the continued ability to interface with their leaders even after the project closes.

A PLACE TO LISTEN, A PLACE TO BE HEARD

GSP/Taqadam has built the capacity of local officials to conduct public forums to identify citizen needs and develop citizen-recommended PPLs. GSP/Taqadam provided technical assistance for the establishment of citizen participation units, and additional attention was given to

promoting community outreach through websites, social media, and public announcements. In 2013, the percentage of provincial public meetings supported by GSP/Taqadam was 100 percent. By 2014, this percentage had dropped to 30 percent because provincial officials and NGOs initiated 70 percent of the 71 public meetings held. Given this trend, the evidence would clearly suggest that public meetings would continue to take place, post-project.

GSP/Taqadam's public participation intervention is helping connect disparate stakeholders — both regular citizens and marginalized populations such as widowed and divorced women, the elderly, youth, the disabled, the unemployed, and displaced populations — to the provincial planning and resource allocation processes in nine provinces, thus ensuring inclusion, a fundamental tenet of a citizen-focused public service delivery system.

DELIVERING THE ESSENTIALS

Provincial ESDO units currently use GSP/Taqadam performance standards to measure the quality of service delivery and recommend improvements. In nine provinces, ESDO teams have established performance standards, collected indicator data, and measured service delivery gaps effectively. In eight of these provinces, fully funded ESDO units have been institutionalized and are part of the GO structure. These institutionalized units present a tremendous opportunity for

SNAPSHOT

Maysan Local Government Cleans Up One Bag at a Time



GSP/TAQADUM

Maysan ESDO members talk with the Governor about recommendations for service delivery improvement.

The Maysan Essential Services Delivery Oversight (ESDO) unit, formed with the assistance of USAID's Governance Strengthening Program, GSP/Taqadum, has been proactively visiting underserved neighborhoods in the province, polling citizens about the quality of public services, and providing recommendations to the Governor's Office to improve service delivery. The success of the Maysan ESDO prompted the Governor to approve the establishment of an "ESDO Division," which will report directly to the Governor, and comprise four units: performance monitoring, field surveying, data analysis, and public awareness.

During a visit to the Al-Sharqi neighborhood, the ESDO unit noted that the neighborhood was nearly free of trash. Upon further assessment, the unit found that the neighborhood is home to a factory that produces trash bags, which are regularly distributed to citizens. In Al-Sharqi, the ESDO "trash bag indicator," which measures citizens' access to trash bags and bag availability, is nearly 100 percent, whereas in Amrah, the capital of Maysan, the indicator is 0 percent.

Reporting to the Governor, the ESDO unit made an initial recommendation for allocating 15 million Iraqi dinar, approximately \$13,000, to purchase trash bags from the Al-Sharqi factory to distribute across Maysan. The Governor agreed, but the factory owners explained they could not produce any more bags – they were already at capacity.

Thinking outside of the box, the GSP/Taqadum ESDO advisors suggested investing the money into bolstering the factory's production capacity. The Governor promptly approved the scheme, and the factory will soon be able to produce 50,000 bags per day, compared to the 17,000 bags per day it previously produced.

The increased distribution of trash bags will decrease the staff time necessary to clean up streets, prevent the trash from blowing out of open bins or trash pick-up vehicles and, most importantly, protect the environment and citizens from bacteria and foul odors. Because not all families can afford to buy trash bags from the local market, economically disadvantaged populations will receive bags free of cost.

sustainability, as they have been elevated to a separate government function with their own staff, budgets, and resources. Provincial ESDO units are perhaps one of GSP/Taqadam's most successful interventions and now enjoy the participation of both citizens and government officials.

SYSTEMIZATION THROUGH DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Systemization of operational processes is fully rooted in part of the work of ESDO, CSD, and SLIT through the use of database applications. GSP/Taqadam's information technology approach is to introduce incremental solutions that are easy to use, have a high adoption rate, and deliver relational data that serves the decision-making process. Equally, these database systems are designed to enhance existing operational processes. Accessing public records and government information helps ensure transparency and accountability. To make public information readily accessible, the data must be collected and securely stored and managed. GSP/Taqadam has developed two databases (ITRS and SLIT) to automate data input.

Going back to 2012, the SLIT database produced reports showing legislation that has been

passed but not implemented. Several provinces have acted on this information. ITRS is widely used in the CSDs at the PC and GO level and its user base is enthusiastic about the tool. The ESDO database is a combination document depository and interactive application. The database captures provincial standards for targeted services, indicators, detailed site visit reports, citizen surveys, analytical reports, ESDO recommendations and interventions, photographs, and official letters.

Similarly, the SLIT database has become the way to ensure important provincial legislation is put into action. SLIT subcommittees are now fully functional in all provinces and four provinces have institutionalized SLIT units, thereby ensuring their sustainability by, among other things, allocating funds for staff and expanding legislative operations. In the other 12 provinces, SLIT subcommittees are using the database to generate reports for the PC and the GO. The continued use of these digital solutions ensures sustainability of GSP/Taqadam's activities and its ongoing legacy.

SNAPSHOT

GSP/Taqadum Assists Dhi Qar Governor's Office in Issuing Letters of Credit



Trucks deliver imported materials including steel beams for the construction of Al Hadarat Bridge, as required by the terms and conditions of a Dhi Qar letter of credit.

The director of the French company implementing the project said,

“ The Al Hadarat Bridge will be an important construction and touristic milestone for Dhi Qar.”

In early 2013, the hulking frame of a bridge stood next to the Euphrates River at Al Nasiriya, in Dhi Qar Province. Construction on what was supposed to be the province's signature bridge, the Al Hadarat, was stalled due to the unavailability of required parts in Iraq, and its skeleton was beginning to rust.

To import the necessary parts for the bridge, the Dhi Qar Governor's Office (GO) asked USAID's Governance Strengthening Project, GSP/Taqadum, to help build their institutional capacity to manage letters of credit, a widely used method of payment in international trade. Letters of credit are issued by a financial institution and allow buyers, such as governments, to import goods and services from abroad, while guaranteeing to the seller that payment will be made regardless of whether the buyer ultimately fails to pay. These letters enable provinces to do business directly with foreign companies, and to procure goods and services not available on the local market.

United Nations sanctions against Iraq from 1990 precluded Iraqi governorates from directly engaging in business with foreign companies. Instead, in Dhi Qar, the GO outsourced issuing letters of credit to the commercial section of a state-owned company, experienced in dealing with foreign suppliers, which greatly slowed procurements. In 2013, financial sanctions were lifted, but Dhi Qar GO had no experience in administering or negotiating letters of credit.

Working closely with the Dhi Qar GO, GSP/Taqadum built government employees' technical capacity to manage letters of credit, working directly with the Trade Bank of Iraq instead of through an intermediary. With GSP/Taqadum's help, the province established and institutionalized a Letters of Credit Unit in the GO, which is now staffed by six employees. The Unit in Dhi Qar now oversees all contracts requiring purchasing agreements in coordination with the GO's contracting department. So far, the unit has facilitated nine letters of credit with foreign companies. Under those contracts, Dhi Qar's GO has imported spare parts for power plants and radiation detectors, and the required materials to complete the construction of Al Hadarat Bridge. Seeing the growing capacity of Dhi Qar's Unit, GOs in Diyala, Salah ad Din, Karbala, and Wasit established their own units. The Salah ad Din and Diyala GOs plan to use the units, trained by GSP/Taqadum staff, to solve shortages of food and other ration card items in the Iraqi market, which have recently caused dramatic increases in food prices. Using letters of credit, these provinces can now acquire goods from international companies to respond to the shortages.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAJOR DELIVERABLES AND PRODUCTS

GSP/Taqadum has generated a significant number of materials through hands-on workshops, comprehensive manuals and guides, and delivering a substantial amount of training. The following table reflects GSP/Taqadum's product directory;

select documents, as indicated, are included in Annex 1 on the DVD appended to the back of this report. Other documents can be found in the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) database.

Members of the Basrah provincial council's Monitoring and GO Oversight working group visit the Zubair – Iman Ali Mosque Flyover Interchange Project in March 2014.

GSP/TAQADUM





GSP/TAQADUM
The Zubair – Iman Ali Mosque Flyover Interchange Project underway in March 2014 in Basrah.

GSP/Taqadum Product Directory

Key Deliverables	
Title of Report	Date of Production
01 Annual Lessons Learned and Best Practices	Sep-12
02 Annual Lessons Learned and Best Practices	Sep-13
03 Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report	Sep-12
04 Citizen Participation	Jun-12
05 Citizen Satisfaction Survey	Jun-12
06 Communications Report and Advocacy Training	Jul-13
07 Community Excellence Network	Jul-13
08 Comprehensive Baseline Report	Mar-12
09 Customer Service Support	Mar-14
10 Decentralization Roadmap	Jan-14
11 Electronic System for Sub-Legislation Implementation Tracking	Oct-13
12 Gender Strategy 2012	Jan-12
13 Issue Tracking Reporting System User Manual	Jan-14
14 Local Government Communications	Oct-12
15 Local Government Association Evaluation and Recommendations	Sep-12
16 Managing Citizen Service Desks	Jan-13
17 Mobilization Flexibility National Coverage Plan	Oct-11
18 Opportunities for Public Officials to Engage	Apr-12
19 OSTP Conference I	Apr-12

Key Deliverables	
Title of Report	Date of Production
20 OSTP Conference II	Oct-12
21 OSTP Conference III Documents	Dec-12
22 OSTP Conference III Materials	Dec-12
23 OSTP Conference III	Feb-13
24 OSTP Excellence Network Action Plan	May-13
25 OSTP Excellence Network Conference Keynote	Jan-13
26 OSTP Guidebook	Oct-12
27 OSTP Process Streamlining Materials	Dec-13
28 OSTP Provincial Workshop Training Materials	Nov-13
29 OSTP Self-assessment People Criterion	Jul-13
30 OSTP Solution Implementation	Jun-13
31 OSTP Success Stories	Apr-12
32 OSTP Training Materials	Mar-12
33 Practitioners Community Excellence	Mar-13
34 Process Streamlining Guidelines	Dec-13
35 Project Implementation Plan	Dec-11
36 Provincial Governments COE Conference	Apr-12
37 Provincial Organizational Development Conference	Mar-14
38 Provincial Planning	May-13
39 Road Map Recommendations	Feb-14
40 Status of GAPTIS	Aug-12
41 Strengthening Provincial Financial Systems	Apr-14
42 National SLIT Workshop Event	Oct-13
43 Vulnerable Populations	Jun-12
44 Law 21 Legal Analysis	2012
45 Delay of Investment Projects in the Provinces: Legislative and Administrative Barriers	Nov-13
46 Citizen Satisfaction Survey	Nov-13
47 Current Provincial Budgeting Process in Iraq	Sept-12
48 First National Conference for Improving the Provincial Financial Management Regulatory Framework and the Execution Rate of the Provincial Investment Budget	Mar-14



GSP/TAQADUM

The Omara Municipality in Maysan distributed large trash receptacles as part of an ESDO-supported public awareness activity in the Hay Al Askary neighborhood in Maysan in February of 2014

CHAPTER SIX

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND LESSONS LEARNED

The context and operating environment of implementing a project of GSP/Taqadum's size and scope was not without its challenges and provided many lessons learned. Section III discusses lessons learned as applicable to each project initiative; challenges and lessons learned as applicable to the overall project are presented below.

PROJECT-WIDE CHALLENGES INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- The provincial elections in 2013 presented significant challenges. With a 70 percent turnover, these elections were disruptive given the very high number of new elected officials throughout the country. In many cases, provinces needed at least two months, often longer, to settle into a working mode, complete their transitions, and build new teams. New committees and

council members also required training. In areas where GSP/Taqadum had strong relationships, new relationships frequently needed to replace old ones and it took time to build trust with the new local counterparts. Additionally, the run-up to the national elections of April 2014 was a distraction that affected participation and attendance at GSP/Taqadum activities. Governorate officials were involved with activities of their political parties and often focused on the elections instead of GSP/Taqadum interventions. Elections tend to proliferate a rise in politically related violence; this was the case for the national and provincial elections and caused disruptions for the project.

- Security issues associated with the ongoing unrest in neighboring nations as well as internally affected the ability of the

SNAPSHOT

Putting a Price Tag on Provincial Buy-in



GSP/TAQADUM

In Babil, an ESDO site visit to the Al-Askary neighborhood resulted in the First Deputy Governor calling for 650 meters of plastic pipes for a water network. The province also invested in other supplies, such as pumps, chloride, alum devices, and purity check devices, for a total investment of \$3,328,333.



GSP/TAQADUM

The Wasit ESDO team and Taqadum staff, led by the Deputy Governor and Chair of the PC Services Committee, discuss potential improvements at a field test in the Al-Kut District. Following ESDO recommendations, the Wasit Provincial Council ordered the Wasit Water Directorate to install 10,000 liter water tanks and remove all water network violations.

If it is true that you get what you pay for, then 11 of 15 Iraqi provinces believe it is worth spending on USAID's Governance Strengthening Project (GSP/Taqadum) guidance, interventions, and recommendations. Iraqi governorates have surpassed even USAID expectations by buying in to GSP/Taqadum's counsel on improving citizen services.

Whenever a governorate or the Government of Iraq (GOI) spends provincial money, based on findings of a GSP/Taqadum work group or provincial unit, it is labeled and tallied as project results cost sharing (PRCS) – proof of local governments' faith in the recommendations made by GSP/Taqadum. Each time that happens, the project once again meets its overall objective: to create a more effective and responsive provincial government.

The purpose of government is to serve citizens, and Iraqis are in great need of improved essential public services. While some of these provincial expenditures have been made in the area of systems and databases, most PRCS purchases have been for municipalities and public works, and have been made as a result of suggestions or findings made by GSP/Taqadum's Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) working groups or units – units that have been institutionalized into the provinces' operational budgets. Six governors have incorporated ESDO units into their provincial governments, while four others have active ESDO working groups.

ESDO units and provincial working groups were organized to increase and improve the level of essential services in underserved neighborhoods. They conduct tens of site visits and provide recommendations to improve service delivery. Based on their findings, the units urge departments to update existing supplies or equipment.

Because of GSP/Taqadum's interventions, provincial governments and ministry directorates have worked together to improve water, sewer, storm water, and/or trash collection services in underserved neighborhoods. PRCS, while mostly tied to ESDO, has also been documented for other GSP/Taqadum activities (Sub-Legislation Implementation Tracking, Citizen Service Desks, and the Organizational Self-assessment and Transformation Program.) The cumulative PRCS as of June 30, 2014 is more than \$46 million." Instead of "The cumulative PRCS at the time of project closeout is more than \$46 million.

project to move forward in key provinces like Anbar, Diyala, Salah ad Din, Ninawa, and Kirkuk. Travel became difficult as checkpoints increased and local staff could not ensure they would be allowed to enter some areas, including at one point the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area. Security within Baghdad also presented challenges for meeting with USAID and other stakeholders, and affected movements for expatriate staff depending on the number of activities needing security resources at the same time.

- Because of changed Iraqi government regulations and policies, visas for expatriate and TCN staff became increasingly difficult to obtain, limiting the availability of consultants

or long-term expatriates and TCNs returning to country after traveling outside of Iraq. These significant delays often resulted in slow deployments of consultants. To address this challenge, some consultants entered and worked in Erbil, being unable to enter Baghdad and the lower 15 provinces. While this often provided a temporary solution, the situation remained challenging, as consultants could not engage as easily with key staff and stakeholders.

- Unexpected road closures and ad hoc holidays due to special national or religious events made programming or traveling difficult and resulted in unanticipated delays to program activities.



CSPTAQADUM

An ESDO team gathers samples for a water quality field test in Karbala's Al Hussainya Sub District in June of 2013.

- International Zone badges became very difficult to obtain and thus impacted project meetings with GOI and USG officials in the International Zone.
- Changes in the scope of work in 2012 and 2013 required changes in the project strategy, structure, systems, and skill sets needed from staff and consultants.

The lessons learned as a result of these challenges and the actions taken to address the challenges, where possible, are described as follows:

- *Hiring the correct staff with meaningful skill sets.* GSP/Taqadum's strategic expatriate recruits often resulted in talented candidates with Arabic language skills, and, where possible, expatriate Iraqis. The ability to speak directly with counterparts proved invaluable as it allowed the project to clearly communicate its goals and establish relationships with key officials. Equally im-

portant, Arabic language considerations in the recruitment of staff allowed the project's technical leaders in Baghdad to communicate efficiently with the field, especially during the periods of disruption previously described. It must be noted that the instances of externally influenced disruptions seldom involved all provinces; accordingly, this allowed technical work in more peaceful areas to continue.

- *Maintaining flexibility to address new directives and just-in-time assistance.* Flexibility has been central to the success of GSP/Taqadum's interventions. Windows of opportunity open unexpectedly. Some interventions proved to be more significant than others, and GSP/Taqadum learned along the way to modify activities to reflect that learning. The period between the inauguration of provincial councils and the downsizing of GSP/Taqadum's program elements during program year 2013 is illustrative of this flexibility and just-in-time



The Wasit ESDO team conducted a second site visit in the Al-Kut District's underserved neighborhood of Al-Hakeem in August 2013. Multiple site visits and surveys made for more reliable data for comparisons on what services should be based on established Iraqi standards for each service department.

GSP/TAQADUM

assistance. On the one hand, there was a need to address capacity building for the PC that was not previously part of the project's scope, while on the other hand the project was downsizing in response to USAID directives. GSP/Taqadum was able to accomplish both by eschewing interventions that required long cycles of implementation in favor of short-term, modular, and meaningful approaches.

- *Empowering provincial governments to yield results.* GSP/Taqadum's approach to capacity building is to provide assistance to augment provincial government structures in order to deliver its technical programming. These augmented structures include: OSTP teams, PPDC, Citizen Participation Units, Monitoring and Oversight work groups, ESDO work groups, CSD teams, and SLIT work groups. These expanded structures, composed of provincial staff, served as an accessible and focused platform for GSP/Taqadum to deliver its technical interventions. Members of the workgroups or teams largely remained the same and as a result, GSP/Taqadum has been able to provide capacity building depth to build expertise for its members. Since these work groups or teams are somewhat permanent and can operate on their own, the project was able to minimize the effects of the disruptions described in this section.
- *Establishing linkages between key stakeholders to drive success and sustainability.* GSP/Taqadum has built on its efforts to link stakeholders in the PCs, GOs, and central government to include citizens, academics, and nongovernmental organizations through PPDC, ESDO, and other initiatives.
- *Identifying champions to yield additional successes.* GSP/Taqadum has promoted the sharing of information, knowledge, and experience within and among provinces to multiply successes. By identifying champions to share their successes, GSP/Taqadum has helped breed cooperation, shift views, and bring other provinces into the fold that are more readily accepting of solutions proven by their counterparts. The sharing of information, knowledge, and experiences can occur without GSP/Taqadum involvement.
- *Institutionalizing best practices.* GSP/Taqadum worked to institutionalize organizational development, provincial planning, projects and service delivery monitoring and oversight, citizen participation, standards, and legislation implementation systems.



GSP/TAQADUM

A representative of state Ministry of Women's Affairs at the GSP/ Taqadum National Conference on Developing Local Legislation to Stop Violence against Women.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COST SHARING BY THE NUMBERS

Cost sharing reflects provincial governments' commitment to participate, take action, and sustain GSP/Taqadum's program interventions and is indicative of USAID's return on its investment in GSP/Taqadum. The three types of cost sharing captured by the project are activity-, results-, and transition-based. Activity cost sharing calculates the involvement of provincial government in GSP/Taqadum's capacity building activities and includes labor, and embedded office and transportation costs. Results cost sharing aggregates a provincial government's actions that are directly related to a GSP/Taqadum intervention and primarily include costs to improve public service delivery. Transition cost sharing counts all costs associated with institutionalizing a GSP/Taqadum's program intervention to continue the effort within the ranks of provincial

government after GSP/Taqadum support ends.

One of GSP/Taqadum's most significant financial management successes was the extent to which the project cost-shared cash and other resources with provincial governments during implementation. When a governorate or the central government expended provincial funds based on findings of a GSP/Taqadum work group or provincial unit, the project tallied and tracked this funding as project results cost sharing (PRCS) or other category of contribution. This cost sharing demonstrated provincial governments' commitments to improving services to citizens, as well as confidence in the recommendations made by GSP/Taqadum. Total cost sharing contributions in nine provinces in which the project worked totaled \$48,271,077 (see detail in table on next page.)

The project developed specific tools and systems to encourage, document, and track cost-shared activities, including a cost-share methodology to ensure adequate and consistent cost-share determination, application, and documentation throughout the life of the project. A field assistance guide was developed to broaden categories of cost-sharing contributions and to specifically define PRCS as a cost share category as follows: Project Results Cost Sharing records all resources mobilized by the provincial government as a result of the conduct of GSP/Taqadum activities. (Previously, all cost-sharing contributions were in the Project

Activity Cost Sharing category that included only such cost elements as labor, transportation, and embedded office cost.)

Recommendations of ESDOs and their evidence-based reporting to provincial services departments, GOs, and PCs helped generate many cost-sharing contributions. For example, the Najaf ESDO found gaps in efficiency regarding garbage collection and the provision of home plastic bags. Based on this information, the Governor of Najaf allocated \$1.5 million for clean-up work in the province and purchased one million garbage bags worth \$41,667 to assist in solid waste

Province	Activity Cost Sharing	Results Cost Sharing	Transition Cost Sharing	Total
Anbar	\$136,058	\$2,246,683		\$2,382,741
Babil	\$271,544	\$3,387,219	\$50,500	\$3,709,263
Baghdad	\$336,860	\$670	\$5,760	\$343,290
Basrah	\$252,020		\$43,666	\$295,686
Dhi Qar	\$123,061			\$123,061
Diwaniyah	\$148,461	\$11,933,581	\$96,557	\$12,178,599
Diyala	\$150,804	\$30,092	\$12,167	\$193,063
Erbil	\$188,480			\$188,480
Karbala	\$201,322	\$887		\$202,209
Kirkuk	\$85,532			\$85,532
Maysan	\$85,593	\$65,166	\$12,500	\$163,259
Muthanna	\$86,357	\$56,250		\$142,607
Najaf	\$216,732	\$1,591,666	\$72,200	\$1,880,598
Ninawa	\$181,314	\$3,238		\$184,552
Salah ad-Din	\$131,848			\$131,848
Wasit	\$242,307	\$28,955,625	\$49,117	\$29,247,048
Total	\$2,838,292	\$48,271,077	\$342,466	\$51,451,835

collection. The table above shows the values by province of cost-sharing contributions in nine provinces in which GSP/Taqadum worked.

Through June 30, 2014, for every \$1 of USAID's investment in GSP/Taqadum, Iraqi provincial government spent \$0.91 as its cost-sharing contribution, which

is a significant commitment on the part of the project's counterparts.



GSPTAQADUM

The Wasit ESDO team, led by the Deputy Governor and Chair of the PC Services Committee, conduct a field test in the Al-Kut District underserved neighborhood of Al-Hakeem in May 2013.

DVD INDEX

ANNEX 1: REPORTS AND DELIVERABLES

ANNEX 2: MONITORING AND EVALUATION INFORMATION



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