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Proposal for the Establishment of a National Center for Excellence in Government in Iraq

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Executive Summary

This document is a proposal for the creation of the Iraq Center for Excellence in Government (ICEG). It was mandated to USAID-Tarabot by the High Committee for Administrative Reform, under the leadership of Mr. Thamir Ghadban, at a meeting held on June 4th, 2012, at the offices of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council (see Appendix 1).

ICEG is envisioned as an entity whose role would be to foster sustainable development throughout the Iraqi public sector by encouraging organizations at all levels of government to pursue excellence in every aspect of their functions. One of ICEG's most important activities would consist of delivering yearly awards to government organizations that would have distinguished themselves by their development strategies and accomplishments, as well as to government programs that would have achieved exceptional impact.

In addition, ICEG would stand as a national reference and knowledge center in the field of government excellence, offering tools and guidelines for reform, and acting as an observer of the Iraqi public sector. In this regard, ICEG would also constitute a bridge between the government and the citizens of Iraq, strengthening transparency and exchange.

As requested by the High Committee for Administrative Reform, ICEG's concept was developed with the contribution of a broad spectrum of stakeholders including public servants, citizens, civil society organizations, and private sector organizations. For over two months, representatives of these groups were consulted through meetings, focus groups, and surveys.

This approach was adopted to ensure that the model developed would in every aspect address the specificities of the Iraqi institutional landscape. In particular, this document proposes concrete ideas for ICEG's affiliation, functions, structure, foundational principles, and development, as summarized below:

- **Affiliation**. It is recommended to affiliate ICEG to a high executive office in the government, which, would establish its legitimacy and authority in the public sector, and would equip it with the resources to develop effective and broad reaching programs. The Council of Ministers General Secretariat (CoMSec) was identified as the entity, which, by virtue of its role, might be the most suitable to host ICEG. For more detail on ICEG's proposed affiliation, see page 44.

- **Functions**. It is proposed that ICEG assume five main functions:

    1. *Incentive Provision*. Encourage organizations at all levels of government to engage sustainable development strategies and pursue excellence in their functions.
    2. *Monitoring*. Track the development and progress of the Iraqi public sector through field research and organizational assessments.
    3. *Technical Guidance*. Provide guidance to government organizations on how to improve their performance.
    4. *Knowledge Management*. Establish knowledge exchange mechanisms, and foster transparency.
    5. *Feedback*. Provide feedback to government organizations to help them assess the internal and external impact of their policies.

    For more detail on ICEG's proposed functions, see page 44.

- **Structure**. It is proposed that the leadership of ICEG be shared by an Executive Director and a Board of Trustees, jointly composed of government officials, scholars, representatives of the civil society, and representatives of professional associations. The Executive Director's role would be to lead ICEG's short and long term strategies, while the Board of Trustees would act as a supervising entity. The Executive director would manage three departments:

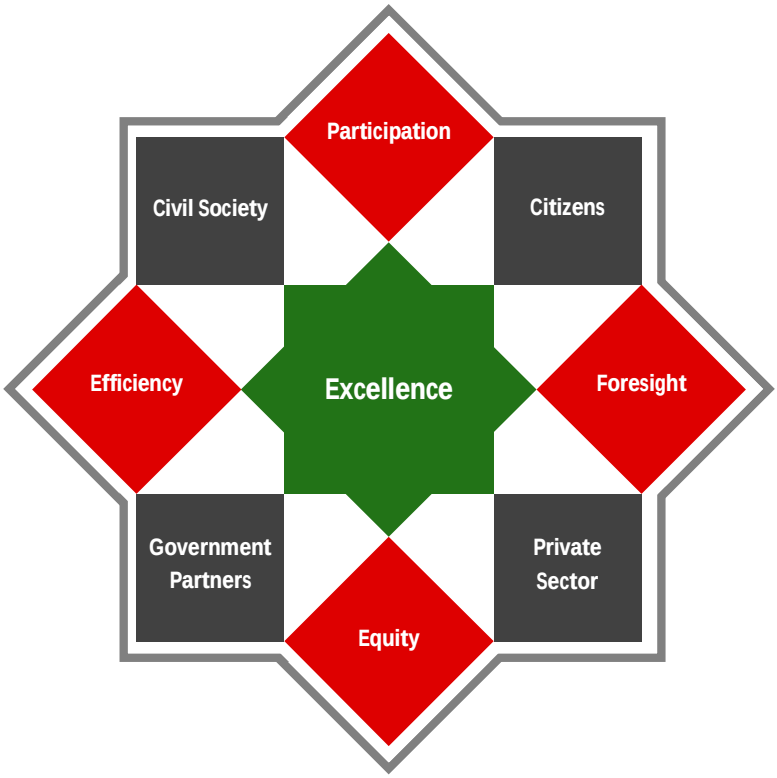
    1. The *Research, Development and Training Department* would be in charge of training organizational performance assessors, as well as conducting field research on the public sector and on public service delivery in Iraq.
    2. The *Coordination and Assessment Department* would be in charge of producing performance assessments of government organizations, as well as recommending organizations for the ICEG Awards.
    3. The *Public Relations and Media Department* would be in charge of ICEG's promotion and communication activities.

    For more detail on ICEG's proposed structure, see page 49.

- **Foundational Principles/Excellence Model**. An excellence model was developed for ICEG based on the study of existing models and extensive consultations with stakeholders. Four foundational principles were identified to

guide the development of the Iraqi public sector: *Participation*, *Foresight*, *Equity*, and *Efficiency*. These principles were graphically combined with the four main partners of public organizations into a diagram that was designated as *The Excellence Star* (see below).

In addition, a set of 7 organizational performance criteria was developed: *Leadership*, *People*, *Strategy*, *Knowledge*, *Processes*, *Material Resources*, and *Results*. Based on these seven criteria, and the four foundational principles, an organizational assessment methodology was developed and is proposed as the foundation for ICEG's award system. For more information on ICEG's proposed model of excellence, see page 32.



- **Development Plan**. A preliminary strategy for the development of ICEG was drafted. It is composed of three phases:

  1. *Design – 32 weeks*. Finalization of ICEG's design, including by-laws, operational processes, and methodological tools.
  2. *Establishment – 24 weeks*. Official creation, appointment of leadership and mobilization of financial resources.
  3. *Development – 2½ year*. Full development of ICEG's five functions, and first ICEG Awards Ceremony.

  For more detail on the plan proposed for ICEG's development, see page 65.

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Acronyms

ADAEP	Abu Dhabi Award for Excellence in Government Program
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CoMSec	Council of Ministers General Secretariat
DG	Director General
DGEP	Dubai Government Excellence Program
GII	Global Innovation Index (INSEAD)
HCAR	High Committee for Administrative Reform
ICEG	Iraqi Center for Excellence in Government
KACE	King Abdullah II Center for Excellence
NDP	National Development Plan
PMAC	Prime Minister's Advisory Council
TQM	Total Quality Management
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

National Context

Emerging from over three decades of instability, Iraq's public sector faces today a significant challenge to reform itself in order to serve better and more efficiently Iraqi citizens and organizations.

The country's performance measured against the indicators of the Doing Business division of the World Bank sheds light on the urgency for profound and sustainable transformations. Once a country with a flourishing construction industry, Iraq today ranks 120th worldwide in terms of ease of obtaining a construction permit, a procedure that requires 13 steps, spread on average over 187 days. The cost of starting a business amounts to close to 116% of the average income, which places the country 176th. It takes on average 51 days to register property, making this essential procedure more cumbersome than in considerably poorer countries[1]. These are some of many indicators of the weight of bureaucracy in Iraq's public administration, its daily impact on citizens' lives, and the hindrance it constitutes to economic development.

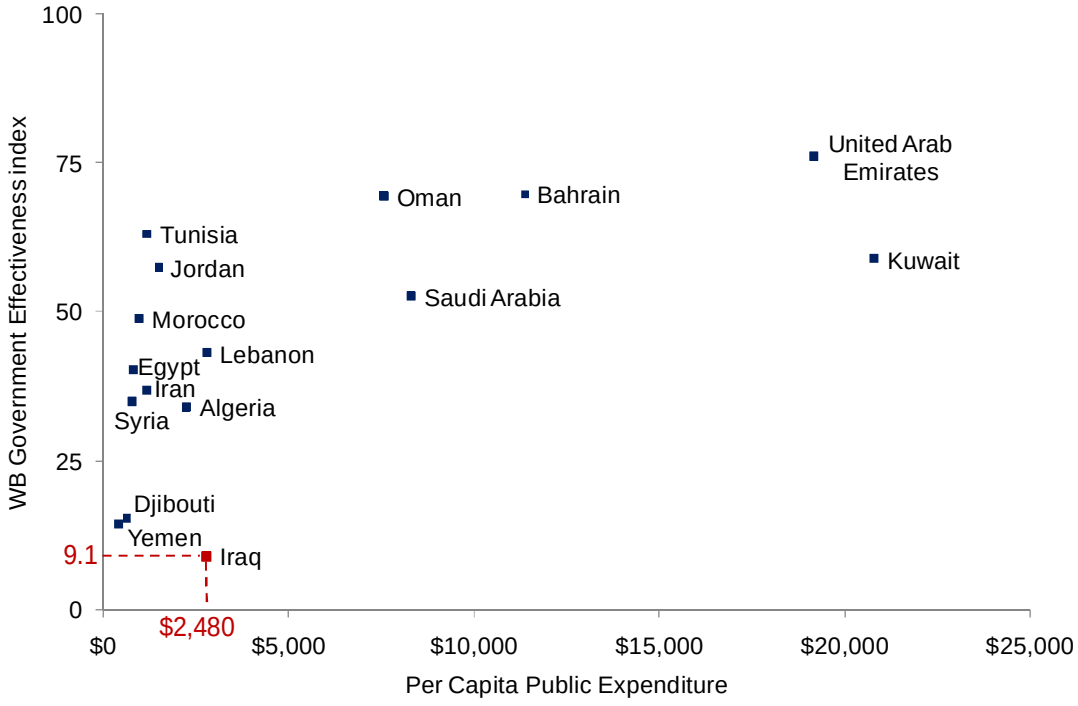
	Average Number of Days to Start a Business	Average Number of Days to Register Property
Iraq	77	51
U.A.E.	6	6
Jordan	12	21

In 2011, the World Bank assigned Iraq a score of 9.1 on a scale from 0 to 100 on the Government Effectiveness index, placing it last among countries of the Middle East and North Africa region. Paradoxically, the Government of Iraq benefits from considerable financial resources, with an average public expenditure of $2,480 per capita. This is roughly $1,200 more than the per capita expenditure of Jordan whose Government Effectiveness score is 57.4, and more than double the per capita expenditure of Iran whose Government Effectiveness score is 36.8 (see graph below).

With this, an outlook on Iraq's administrative history of the past 50 years brings to light a deeply ingrained culture of reform and modernization, severely shattered by the unrest of the late nineties and early 2000s, yet visibly reviving nowadays.

[1] Doing Business, International Finance Corporation (2011), *DB-12 Simulator*, www.doingbusiness.org

Figure 1 : MENA Countries Government Effectiveness Index vs. per Capita Expenditure



Iraq's first notable experience with administrative reform systems dates back to 1962, when the Center for the Development of Industrial Administrations (مركز تطوير الإدارة الصناعية) was established within the Ministry of Industry and Minerals (Law 56), with the support of the United Nations Development Program. In 1970, it was renamed the National Center for Consultation and Management Development (المركز القومي للإستشارات والتطوير الإداري), and affiliated to the Planning Council, thus adopting a government-wide advisory role (Law 208).

Two years later, the government of Iraq sought to impose a common strategic framework with the passing of Law 333, which mandated the *National Consultative Center for Administrative Development* to prepare an Administrative Development Plan (خطة التنمية الادارية) for the entire public sector. In addition, the law ordered the creation of offices dedicated to the development of administrative reform strategies (أقسام التنظيم والإنتاجية وأقسام التنظيم والأساليب), reporting directly to the highest authority in each government organization.

Since then, six 5-year plans have been issued. The last two in 1993 and 2004 were respectively titled "Administrative Development Strategy" (إستراتيجية التنمية الإدارية) and "Administrative Reform Strategy" (إستراتيجية الإصلاح الإداري). Unfortunately, their effectiveness was mitigated by the lack of legislative support and the social and political unrest.

Thus, the nationally coordinated efforts for administrative reform significantly slowed in the early 2000's and have stagnated since. However, the culture of administrative development undoubtedly persisted within the Iraqi public sector, as is remarkably reflected in the multiplication of individual initiatives at the national and sub-national levels. Some notable examples are the creation of a Department for Organizational Development (قسم التطوير المؤسسي) at the Ministry of Environment, and the creation of a Department for Quality Assurance and Organizational Performance (قسم ضمان الجودة والأداء المؤسسي) at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. With the support of USAID-Tarabot, other ministries and provincial organizations are currently planning to equip themselves with similar structures and systems dedicated to internal administrative reform.

In the context described, the establishment of ICEG would address three goals: first, it would help expand the observed impetus for reform to the entire public sector; second, it would establish a common framework for organizational development and foster coordination between public organizations; third, it would support the Iraqi administration establishing a long term vision for itself.

The Excellence Center Strategy

Over the past 20 years, many administrative reform programs throughout the world and in the Middle East in particular, have been developed under the emerging banner of "Excellence in Government". "Excellence" is generally understood as an applied culture of sustainable improvement at all times and at all levels of an organization in fulfillment of its mission. Transparency, participation, equity, strategy, efficiency, and competency are the most commonly cited operational principles of excellence.

Today several conceptual frameworks exist for applying "excellence", both in the private and in the public sector. An increasingly popular, broad-reaching, and seemingly successful government strategy to foster the adoption of "excellence practices" consists of supporting the creation of entities whose mission is to guide and provide incentives to other organizations. The best-known example worldwide is the nonprofit organization EFQM (formerly the European Foundation for Quality Management) founded in Brussels in 1989 by a group of prominent corporate leaders with the help of the European Commission. The EFQM excellence model has since stood as the ultimate reference in the field.

In the Middle East, Dubai has been a pioneer with the creation in 2002 of the Dubai Government Excellence Program (DGEP) [2]. This was a significant component of the Emirate's strategy to reform its administrations, improve government services, and foster civil service engagement as well as a spirit of positive competition among government organizations. A major segment of DGEP's role is to raise awareness of good government practices through conferences and workshops. In addition, DGEP delivers yearly a number of awards to recognize distinguished civil servants and government teams, exceptional government programs and projects, as well as public organizations whose action has made significant social impact. The model it uses to evaluate organizations is derived from the EFQM model, with regular updates.

The King Abdullah II Center for Excellence (KACE) founded in 2006 in Jordan adopted a similar mission, combining awareness raising and the provision of incentives through an award system[3]. It is noted however that KACE aims at a broader cross-sectoral impact than DGEP. Every two years, it delivers awards to one government organization, one private sector organization, and one professional association that have distinguished themselves by exceptional governance practices. The assessment model developed by KACE also finds its roots in the EFQM model. Actual assessments are conducted by volunteer-assessors, selected, trained, and coordinated by the Center. Procedural checks are built within the system to ensure the neutrality of assessments, in particular by sending two assessors to each organization, independently.

In 2007, Abu Dhabi followed the trend set by Dubai and Jordan with the establishment of the Abu Dhabi Award for Excellence Program (ADAEP)[4]. While ADAEP does

[2] www.dubaiexcellence.ae

[3] www.kaa.jo

[4] www.adaep.ae

engage awareness raising campaigns and proposes its own organizational assessment system based on Total Quality Management (TQM), its focus is mostly on providing incentives through a highly developed award system. No less than 23 awards are delivered yearly, to individuals, teams, and entities in the government.

As shown in Figure 1 (Page 8), the World Bank ranks today UAE's government as the most effective in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) with a score of 76.1 on a scale from 0 to 100. Jordan also scores well with 57.4. This is all the more significant that Jordan's performance far exceeds these of most MENA countries with comparable per capita public expenditures.

How much the Centers of Excellence of the UAE and Jordan have actually contributed to improving their respective governments' performances is difficult to measure. They were both established as part of broad and complex public sector reform strategies with multiple components spread over years. However, Centers of Excellence are unquestionably powerful tools to instill transparency and positive competition in the public sector, which are both increasingly viewed by policy makers as effective instruments for administrative reform[5].

Figure 2 : Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum presenting an Excellence Award

[5] Inger Ulleberg (2009), *Incentive Structures as a Capacity Development Strategy in Public Service Delivery*, The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the International Institute for Educational Planning

The media coverage of KACE's, DGEP, and ADAEP's award ceremonies is one of many signs of the growing public interest for these centers' activities and their resulting positive influence on public organizations. The goal of this proposal is to explore building such system in Iraq to contribute to the development and modernization of its public sector.

Research Strategies and Findings

The development of this proposal for ICEG's foundational principles, organizational design, and functions was based on significant research, which involved the participation of a broad spectrum of Iraqi government stakeholders. This was to ensure that every detail of the proposal would adequately address the specificities of the Iraqi institutional system, as per the express request of the High Committee for Administrative Reform.

The research strategy consisted of two main segments, which were conducted concurrently. The first segment was an in-depth study of existing excellence models developed and successfully adopted in other countries. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of these models' operational principles for initial guidance in the design of an excellence model for Iraq.

The second segment of the research consisted of testing and refining the ideas collected for ICEG's excellence model and organizational design through consultations with relevant stakeholders. This was done through two channels of communication: firstly a survey published on the web; and secondly a series of nine focus groups.

Comparative Study of Existing Excellence Models

Towards the end of the 1990's, improving the performance of government developed into a central topic in the field of public administration. How to adapt modern management techniques, how to optimize the use of resources, how to identify and prioritize citizen needs, and how to foster creativity in the public sector became essential questions to address for policy makers.

"Excellence in Government" emerged from the involvement of several public and private organizations, which sought to provide functional conceptual frameworks for organizational performance improvement. Progressively, the practice of self-assessment based on excellence models spread worldwide as an effective approach for organizations to identify their weaknesses, formulate administrative reform strategies, and incentivize their workforce. Excellence awards soon multiplied, further contributing this trend.

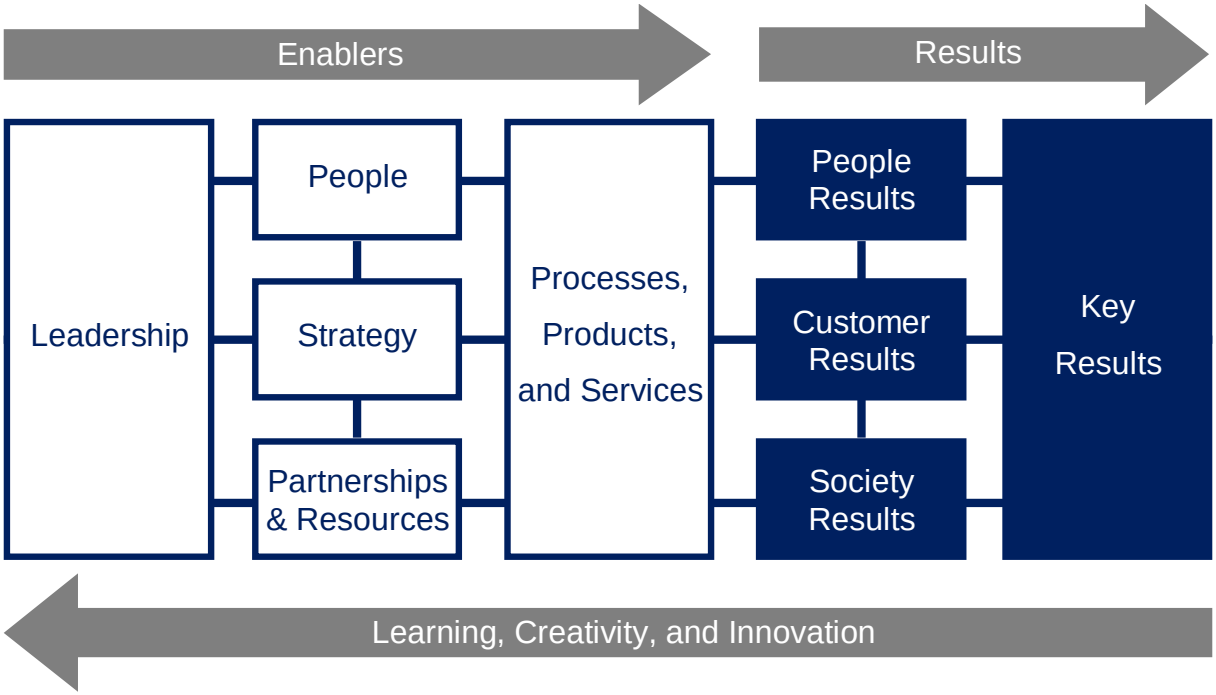
This section provides a comparative overview of three of the most successful excellence models worldwide: the EFQM model, the Malcolm Baldrige National

Quality Award model, and the Deming Award model. More detail on each of these models can be found in Appendix 2.

The EFQM Model

The EFQM (formerly the European Foundation for Quality Management) model was developed in 1992 as a comprehensive management framework to help organizations improve their performances. It is used today by over 30,000 European organizations, and is considered suitable for entities of all sizes and types, across industries and sectors[6].

Figure 3 : The EFQM Excellence Model



The EFQM Excellence model is built on nine criteria for the assessment of government performance, which are classified in two categories:

1. **Enablers**. The five Enablers "cover what an organization does". Hence, these are criteria, over which the organization has a certain level of control:
   - *Leadership*. How the leadership establishes and communicates a mission and a vision, mobilizes and develops resources to achieve goals, and ensures the sustainability of the organization.

[6] www.efqm.org

- *Strategy*. How the organization puts in place a strategy for achieving its mission and vision, taking into consideration beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- *People* How the organization manages, develops, and makes use of individuals and teams' knowledge and skills to serve its operations and strategy.
- *Partnerships and Resources.* How the organization manages its external partnerships and internal resources to develop its operations and implement its strategy.
- *Processes, Products and Services.* How the organization develops and implements processes to serve its strategy and serve the needs of stakeholders.

2. **Results**. The four Results cover what the organization is achieving as a consequence of its activities, and reflect its true performance:
   - *Customer Results*. What is achieved with regard to external beneficiaries.
   - *People Results*. What is achieved with regard to workforce.
   - *Society Results*. What is the impact of the organization's activities on society.
   - *Key Results*. How the company's results compare with its planned objectives.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Model

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was established in 1987 by the government of the United States to improve the competitiveness of US organizations[7].

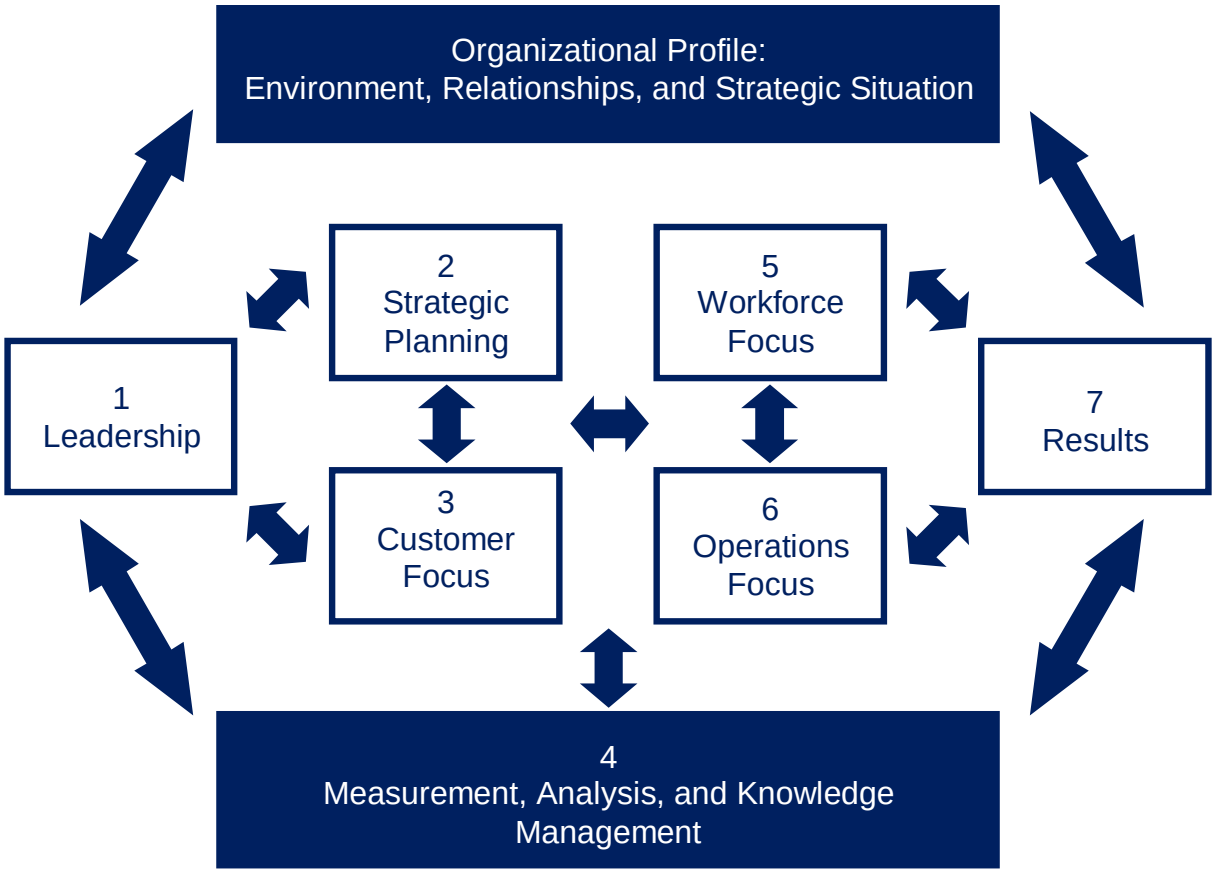
Organizations considered for the award are assessed on their capacity to adopt a management model that ensures sustainable improvement in product and service delivery, demonstrates efficient internal operations, and provides mechanisms for stakeholder participation.

[7] www.nist.gov/baldrige/

The Baldrige Excellence Model aims at providing a comprehensive perspective on management performance, reflect best practices, and provide the base for a common organizational assessment methodology. The Baldrige assessment methodology is both used for the selection of awardees and promoted as a tool for organizations to identify their own strengths and opportunities for development. It measures organizational performance against seven criteria:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Customer focus
- Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management
- Workforce focus
- Operations focus
- Results

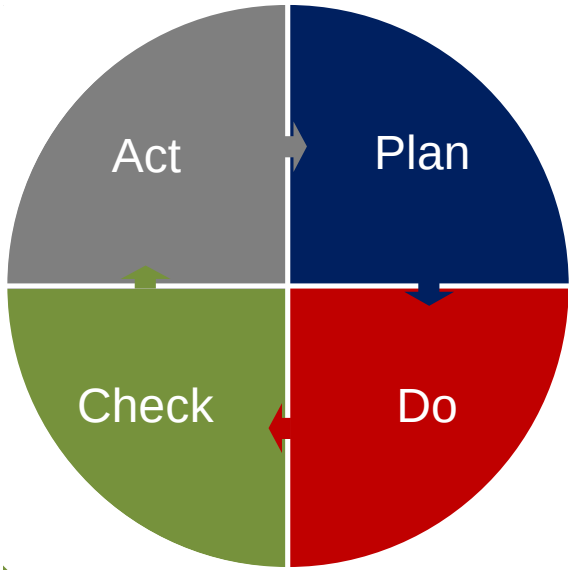
Figure 4 : The Baldrige Excellence Model



The Deming Prize Model

The Deming Prize was established in 1950, originally to recognize Japanese companies for major achievements in the area of quality control. It was based on the theories and tools developed by William Edwards Deming, among them the widely-used Deming Cycle.

Figure 5 : The Deming Cycle



One of the oldest and most famous awards related to organizational performance, the Deming Prize has preserved a strong focus on quality management. The criteria used to evaluate organizations are:

- **Policy**. This criterion examines quality management strategies, as well as the approach for developing policy.
- **Organization**. This criterion examines the organizational structure, lines of authority, and internal cooperation.
- **Human Resources**. This criterion examines human resource management and training, capacity development, and quality control consciousness.
- **Information**. This criterion examines the internal preservation and distribution of information.
- **Analysis**. This criterion examines the approach to identifying, analyzing, and mitigating quality-related problems in production or delivery service.

- **Standardization**. This criterion examines the approach to standardizing procedures.
- **Control**. This criterion examines the development of quality control systems.
- **Quality Assurance**. This criterion examines the approach and the systems used for assessing quality at all stages of operations.
- **Results**. This criterion examines tangible and intangible results of organizational operations.
- **Planning for the Future**. This criterion examines the insight into current conditions, as well as the foresight for long term development

Comparison and Conclusion

The table below provides a comparative overview of the three models of excellence covered in this section. The primary intention is to uncover some of the differentiating elements in their approaches to organizational performance assessment and improvement.

	EFQM	Baldrige	Deming
Established	1992	1987	1950
Organization	EFQM Foundation	Baldrige Program / US Department of Commerce	Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers
Mission	"*To energise leaders who want to learn, share and innovate using the EFQM Excellence Model as a common framework*"	"*To improve the competitiveness and performance of U.S. organizations for the benefit of all U.S. residents (…)*"	To promote the adoption by total quality control principles and tools
Focuses	Gain self-assessment knowledge Leverage social networks Gain customer and employee satisfaction Strengthen corporate social responsibility Develop Comprehensive quality management strategy Improve processes	Gain customer satisfaction Strengthen market competitiveness Gain self-assessment knowledge Improve productivity of processes	Adoption of quality control methods Continuous quality improvement of product and service delivery Improve and develop relations with suppliers. Emphasis on planning

It is noted that the oldest of these models, the Deming, mostly prescribes interventions on the operational systems to improve product quality and service delivery. Thus, it focuses largely on observing and controlling quantitative parameters, as opposed to the Balridge and the EFQM models, which put emphasis also on qualitative aspects of an organization, like leadership and knowledge management.

Research findings of the past fifty years seem to strengthen the case for the latter perspective. Indeed, the growing interest of behavioral science in organizations has brought a new understanding of them as highly complex systems, whose development not only depends on plans, structures, procedures, and resources, but also on such factors as management styles, individuals and community cultures, and social dynamics[8].

In this regard, the practice of self-assessment, prescribed both by the EFQM and the Balridge models, is noteworthy. It requires participative activities, which promote the role of employees and other stakeholders as integral partners in the development of their organizations.

With this, the EFQM model may be more versatile and provide better tools to reach a holistic understanding of organizations than the Baldrige model. Because it was developed firstly to foster the competitiveness of private sector organizations, the Baldrige model seems primarily geared to ensuring greater financial return. The EFQM model, on the other hand, provides a more complex typology of results, more suitable for government organizations.

The EFQM also provides a noteworthy distinction between “Enabler” criteria and “Result” criteria. This allows assessing a large palette of operational parameters against accepted principles of good management, without being strictly limited by actual achievements. Hence, process reforms can be measured with greater sensitivity. This is particularly pertinent to the public sector, whereby there is often a substantial time lag between implementation and tangible yield.

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[8] Cummings, Thomas (2004), *Organization Development and Change: Foundations and Applications*, Chapter in Boonstra, Jaap, *Dynamics of Organizational Change and Learning*, John Wiley & Sons.

Web Survey of Citizens' Expectations

Design

The web survey aimed at exploring citizens' expectations of the government. The most significant advantage of this approach is that it allowed reaching in little time a sizeable number of citizens in total anonymity, and thereby collecting a quantity of candid opinions.

The survey was presented as an anonymous academic work and advertised mostly on web forums and social networking sites like Facebook (see Appendix 3). It was composed of two sections:

- The first section (Questions 1 to 4) collected information on the respondent's age, nationality, home province, and employment. It is noted that the nationality question was simply intended to filter out non-Iraqi citizens.
- The second section (Question 5) asked the respondent to choose 5 principles that s/he considered as the most important to improve government organizations' performance, out of a list of 11 shown below. In addition, the respondent was given the option to type in an additional principle, which s/he considered important and missing from the list provided:
  - **Public Accountability and Transparency**. That government organizations be held responsible for their performance, and that information on their activities and results be fully accessible to citizens.
  - **Citizen Focus**. That government organizations uphold as their primary goal to provide for the needs of citizens.
  - **Efficiency**. That government organizations constantly try optimizing their processes and use of resources.
  - **Effectiveness**. That government organizations focus on increasing the impact of their activities.
  - **Impartiality**. That government organizations develop policy and deliver services without bias, and above any personal interests.
  - **Integrity and Ethics**. That government organizations enforce ethical behavior internally and externally.
  - **Equity**. That government organizations interact equitably with all their partners, and strive to provide equal opportunities internally to employees and externally to citizens.

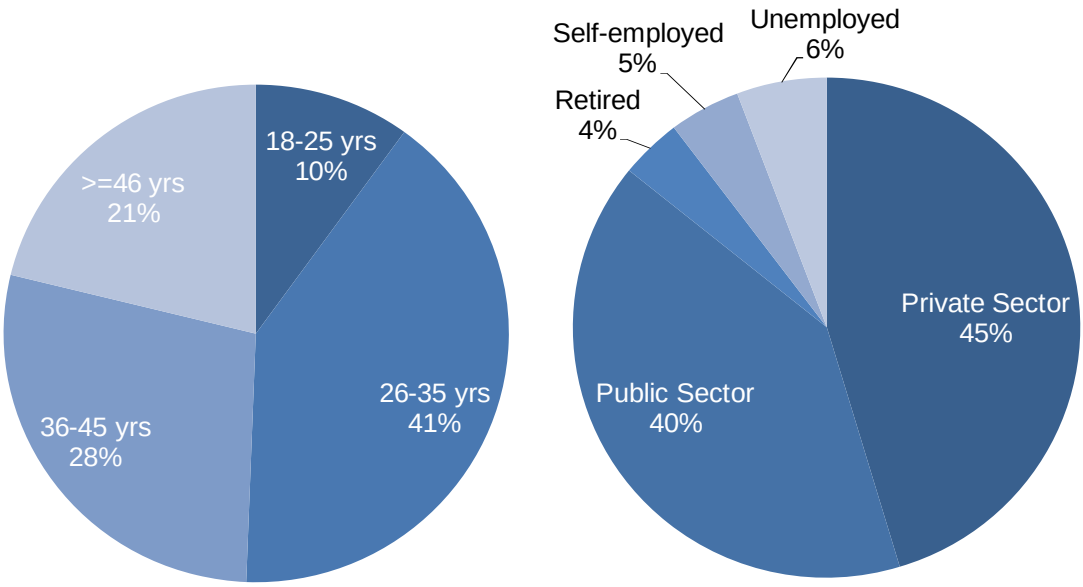
- **Progressiveness**. That government organizations continuously strive to revise and develop their work forces, processes and methodologies.
- **Self-Assessment**. That government organizations establish internal auditing and self-assessment systems, and use their results for engaging administrative reforms.
- **HR Competencies**. That government organizations employ competent staff in all internal and external activities.
- **Cooperation and Constructive Competition**. That government organizations seek productive collaborations with other government organizations and be encouraged to perform better by observing the success of other organizations.

Results and Analysis

A total of 331 Iraqi citizens responded to the survey over a period of about a month. Their demographic profile was fairly balanced in terms of age and employment status as shown in the charts below.

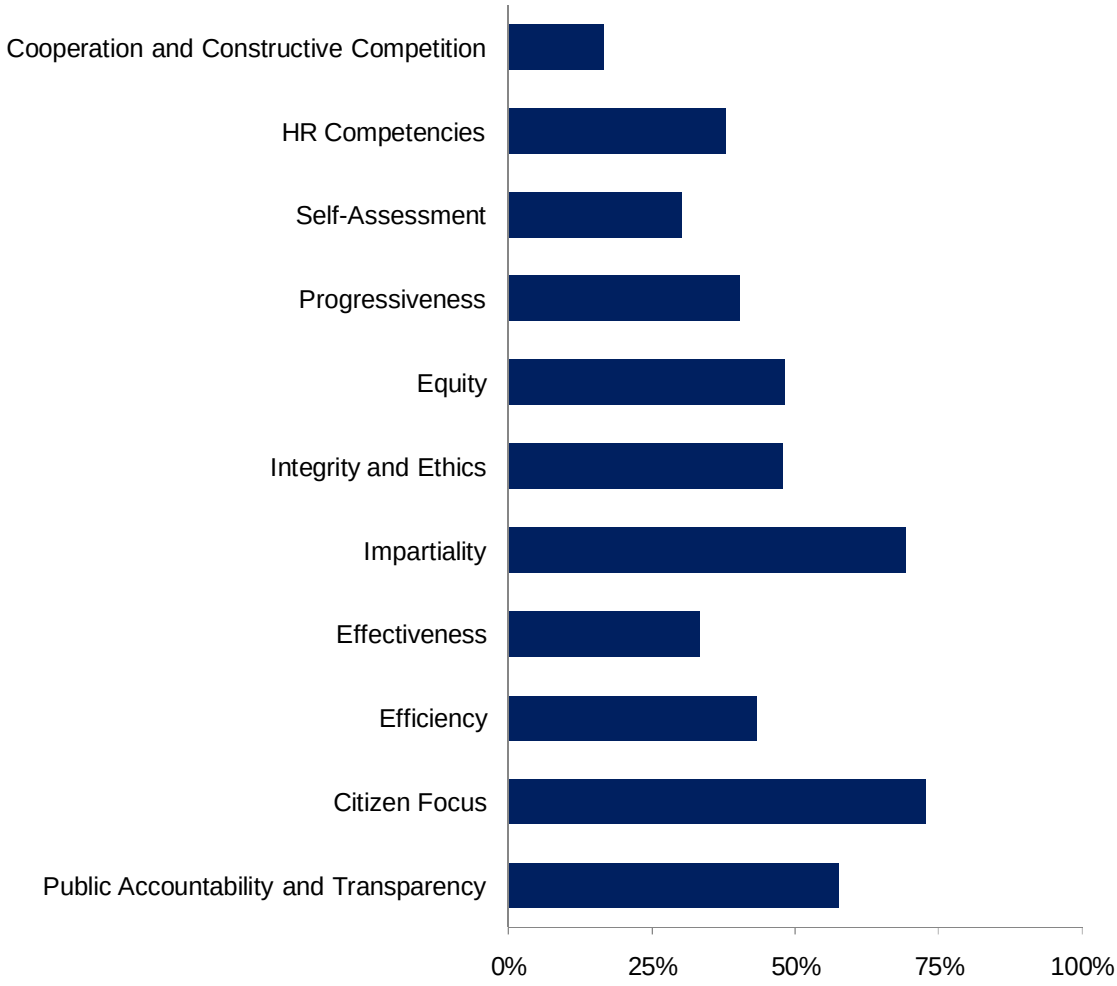
On the other hand, the geographic origins of the respondents showed one of the limitations of this research tool. Nearly 80% of the responses came from Baghdad, which may be the sign of an uneven level of access or adoption of new technologies across the provinces of Iraq.

Figure 6: Age and employment demographics of survey respondents



The main results of the survey are reported in the chart below. It shows the percentage of respondents who selected each of the principles of good governance on the list proposed. The most popular principle, selected by nearly three quarters of respondents, was “Citizen Focus”. It infers a strong public expectation for government policies to be aimed at serving citizens firstly. The next two most popular principles were “Impartiality” at 69%, and “Public Accountability” at 57%.

Figure 7 : Selection percentage of each proposed governance principle



No principle’s selection percentage was significantly low. The minimum of 17% was for “Cooperation and Constructive Competition”, which may have been penalized for being comparatively technical and thereby less comprehensible than most other principles. Also, the comments added manually by some of the respondents mostly aimed at justifying their selections, thus providing some confidence in the exhaustiveness of the list proposed.

It is also observed that, for any principle, little variation of popularity was observed across age groups and employment statuses. In fact, it is notable that the ranking of principles by popularity turned out to be nearly the same for public sector respondents as for private sector respondents, as shown in the table below.

What this suggests is that the expectations of public servants from their own organizations may be largely similar to those of the citizens they serve. It is an encouraging sign that public sector reform programs responding to citizen demand could, if designed and promoted well, face limited internal resistance.

Rank	Private Sector	Public Sector
1	Citizen Focus	Citizen Focus
2	Impartiality	Impartiality
3	Public Accountability and Transparency	Public Accountability and Transparency
4	Integrity and Ethics	Efficiency
5	Equity	Integrity and Ethics
6	Efficiency	Equity
7	Effectiveness	Progressiveness
8	Progressiveness	HR Competencies
9	HR Competencies	Self-Assessment
10	Self-Assessment	Effectiveness
11	Cooperation and Constructive Competition	Cooperation and Constructive Competition

Stakeholders' Focus Groups

Design and Organization

Since its development in the early 1950s the Focus Group has been considered as one of the most effective tools to conduct qualitative research on people's perceptions and opinions. For this, it was identified as the most adequate approach within the scope of this research to consult with select government stakeholders on the topic of administrative reform in Iraq and the creation of ICEG. Following is the list of stakeholder groups that were targeted:

- **Average citizens:** Citizens with normal access to government services and no claim to welfare.
- **Citizens with special needs:** Citizens with challenged access to government services and/or claim to welfare such as the unemployed, widows, and the physically handicapped.
- **Private sector representatives:** Entrepreneurs, small business owners including farmers, and representatives of private sector organizations, such as chambers of commerce and professional associations.
- **University students:** Students enrolled in bachelor and masters programs in Iraqi universities.
- **Scholars:** Professors in Iraqi universities.
- **Civil society representatives:** Management employees in non-governmental organizations, particularly dealing with socially-oriented missions.
- **Mid-level civil servants:** Heads of Departments in central government organizations.
- **High-level civil servants:** Directors General in central government organizations.
- **Provincial government officials:** Elected members of provincial councils and designated officials in Governors Offices.

In total, nine focus groups were conducted between June 26th and July 18th, 2012 (see table below), one for each of the stakeholder groups identified above.

Every focus group brought together an average of 10 participants, which were contacted through USAID-Tarabot's network. Particular effort was put into trying to ensure diversity at multiple levels within each focus group (see Appendix 4). For

example, some organizations in the civil society focus group represented cultural minorities, while others were dedicated to helping citizens with special needs like widows. Similarly, no two Directors General and no two Department Directors invited to the focus groups were from the same ministry. Also, in every focus group conducted outside Baghdad, participants came from several different provinces.

Gender balance, however, was a singularly difficult parameter to control on some occasions. Despite considerable efforts in the preparation process, women were under-represented in the students, the average citizen, and the private sector focus groups. Nonetheless, the recurrence of some important ideas across all sessions, including the ones with good gender balance, indicates that the quality of the information collected may not have been significantly impacted.

Stakeholder Group	Origins of Participants	Date	Venue
Civil Society	Baghdad	June 26th	Oil Cultural Center Baghdad
Students	Baghdad	June 27th	Tarabot Office Baghdad
Average Citizens	Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Erbil, Sulaimaniyah	July 2nd	Noble Hotel Erbil
Private Sector	Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din	July 3rd	Noble Hotel Erbil
Citizens w/ Special Needs	Baghdad	July 10th	Lebanese Club Baghdad
Provincial Officials	Karbala, Babil, Wasit, Najaf, Diwaniyah	July 12th	Tarabot Office Babil
Scholars	Muthanna, Dhiqar, Misan, Basrah	July 15th	Basrah International Hotel
Directors General	Baghdad	July 17th	Lebanese Club Baghdad
Department Directors	Baghdad	July 18th	Lebanese Club Baghdad

Every focus group consisted of two parts. During the first 5 to 10 minutes, a moderator from USAID-Tarabot presented an overview of the ICEG project, and then showed some existing excellence models used in other countries, and finally explained the rules of the session.

The second part was a two hour long open-discussion, organized around 4 to 6 questions. The moderator's role would then consist of facilitating the interactions,

ensuring that every attendee would participate, and that sufficient time would be allocated for each question.

Figure 8 : Focus Group of the Private Sector, on July 3rd, 2012 in Erbil.

A different set of questions was created for each focus group, taking into account the backgrounds of the participants (See Appendix 4). However, all sets aimed at similar objectives: firstly, to capture stakeholders' perspectives on excellence in government and what could be its operational principles; and secondly to collect ideas on how ICEG could be structured and what role it could assume inside the Iraqi governmental landscape.

Results and Analysis

The focus group questions, which aimed at collecting ideas for the development of an excellence model, generated multiple and diverse answers from the participants. The subsequent analysis work consisted of consolidating these answers into a manageable set of principles, which could be regarded as the *stakeholders' prescription to a public sector thriving for excellence*. Four such overarching principles were identified:

- **Participation (المشاركة)**. The demand for participation was particularly strong across all stakeholder groups. The diversity of perspectives pointed to a more complex understanding of participation than the simple practice of soliciting citizens' opinions prior to designing policy. This basic level was expectedly

brought up by the group of average citizens and the group of citizens with special needs, who both noted that current policies were generally poorly aligned with their needs. A broader notion was suggested by nongovernmental organizations, which thrive to be considered by the government as relevant and potent partners at all stages of policy making.

In practice, this vision would translate firstly into recognizing nonprofits and professional associations as prime interlocutors in understanding the needs of citizens and private sector organizations. An even more advanced level would consist of inviting relevant nongovernmental organizations in participating in the development as well as the implementation of policy, for example through joint task forces and public-private partnerships.

It is noted that government representatives suggested similar intra-governmental strategies to improve Iraqi administrations, namely developing systems to ensure that those in charge of implementing policies also play a substantial role in their design. The premise is that the experience of implementation brings a singular understanding of the needs and challenges on the ground, which should be recognized and put to good use. This perspective was expressed both by mid-level employees of ministries with regard to central administrations, and provincial officials with regard to the interactions between central and provincial administrations.

As noted by most stakeholder groups, an essential component of the participation schemes described above is transparency. For stakeholders to contribute to the policy making process in a productive manner, they must have access to instructive, understandable, usable, and auditable information on government operations and their socio-economic impact. This demands from the government to build sustainable and reliable channels of internal and external communication.

Thus, the concept of participation hereby developed can be summarized as the practice of seeking the collaboration in policy making of all concerned and competent parties, as well as creating solid knowledge systems to support such collaboration.

- **Foresight (الرؤية الشاملة)**. The second principle, upon which all stakeholders strongly agreed, is foresight. Most focus group discussions on this topic stemmed from the observation that government policies often seemed

insufficiently planned, poorly coordinated, and addressing immediate needs rather than long term visions.

Hence, the principle of foresight points to a level of attentiveness to citizen needs, awareness of available resources and possibilities, and long term vision. It assumes the ability to translate citizen demands into consistent priorities, and to address them with creative yet pragmatic and sustainable solutions. It also implies the careful consideration of a spectrum of options before selecting the most adequate ones.

As further noted by some focus group participants, the feasibility of solutions will depend on the government's capacity at recognizing resources available and developing work plans that will utilize these resources in an optimal manner. Insufficient coordination between administrations has in the recent years created cases of conflicting, delayed, and poorly implemented policies. Not only are these at a cost for the government, they may also constitute sources of disturbance to citizens. The concept of foresight essentially addresses all these issues.

- **Equity (العدالة)**. The principle of equity was approached by stakeholders from a number of perspectives, which may be synthesized in two axioms: firstly, interacting with all in an egalitarian and impartial manner; secondly, providing special support to the disadvantaged.

  In the interaction between the government on the one hand, and individuals and organizations on the other, the uneven provision of services, the unfair treatment of contractors, and the inconsistent enforcement of the law are particularly sensitive issues. Significant improvement on public perception of the government could be achieved by addressing them. Besides, the impact on civil society and the private sector must also be considered from an economic perspective. Informal impediments to the delivery of government services to organizations can significantly thwart their creation and development. Also, the biased treatment of government contractors may act as a significant discouragement for organizations to participate in public service projects. Conversely, the equitable treatment of individuals and organizations strengthens the feeling of true accountability and therefore fosters civism and responsibility.

  The principle of equity must also be extended to the idea that the government should protect and enable the disadvantaged. This idea stems from the

recognition that not all citizens are equally equipped to access services, or to pursue socio-economic opportunities. Providing support to those with least access fosters a sense of justice.

Inside administrations, the principle of equity translates mostly into an impartial and professional approach to human resources management. This implies ensuring that employees are evaluated, recognized, and promoted based strictly on their proven expertise and actual performance.

- **Efficiency (الكفاءة)**. The fourth principle that united all stakeholder groups was efficiency, which entails a permanent effort on behalf of the government to better utilize its resources, as well as to improve the impact of its activities.

  Within government administrations, the principle of efficiency echoes the ideas previously expressed on human resources management. Having "the right person in the right position" is the phrase that was most often heard during all focus groups.

  Aside from recognizing and promoting the most competent individuals and teams, the principle of efficiency implies empowering them with the administrative authority, and the technical and financial tools to be effective in achieving their mandates.

  Furthermore, administrative performance being equally impacted by systems in place, efficient organizations are the ones that constantly seek to revise, simplify, and streamline, their operating procedures. This is particularly relevant to the management of intra-governmental processes in Iraq, which are often excessively burdened with administrative delays.

  Finally, most stakeholder groups drew a direct link between efficiency and the measurement of results. Evaluating the impact of their own activities should be considered by government organizations as an essential preliminary step in the formulation of new policy and the revision of existing policy. This calls for the development of solid and transparent instruments for the qualitative and quantitative measurement of policy outcomes. In the spirit of excellence, the outcomes selected for observations should be centered on citizens.

As mentioned earlier, stakeholder focus groups were also asked to reflect on the functions that ICEG could assume and the structure it could adopt (see Appendix 4).

Following are the most frequent recommendations that were collected, with regard to functions first:

- **Recognize and Expose**. A shared sentiment among stakeholders, including government employees, is that the significant achievements of public organizations are currently insufficiently recognized and publicized, and, conversely, that poor performances are insufficiently exposed. Hence, the stakeholders' primary recommendation was for ICEG to stand as a national arbiter of public organizations' performance.

  The idea for ICEG to promote meritorious public organizations gives weight to the original suggestion made by USAID-Tarabot to the High Committee for Administrative Reform to launch the establishment of a government award system. The creation of such award would both incentivize public organizations to conduct reform, and publicize the most successful among them.

  More reservation is recommended by USAID-Tarabot regarding the idea to expose poor government performances for reasons that are developed in the next section (page 44).

- **Provide Technical Support**. A concern frequently expressed by stakeholder groups was that good governance practices were not well established yet in the Iraqi public sector. The subsequent suggestion was for ICEG to provide technical support to public organizations, through consultations and workshops for example.

  Such extended involvement may create conflicts of interest, as will be discussed later (page 44).

- **Supervise Civil Service Affairs**. Echoing the demands for more equity and efficiency within government administrations, stakeholder groups suggested that ICEG could play a role advising, supervising, and setting the standard on civil service management in the Iraqi public sector.

  Such functions pertain more to the Civil Service Commission created in 2010, and would probably not have been suggested during the focus groups if the latter commission had already been operational. Nonetheless, the frequency of this suggestion should be seen as an indication of the importance of focusing on human resource management in the development of ICEG's assessment systems.

Regarding ICEG's structure, stakeholder groups reflected mostly on how to build the Center's credibility and ensure its effectiveness. There was general consensus that the trust of citizens would only be earned if concrete measures were taken to protect ICEG from partisanship, and if some level of participation of nongovernmental parties were established. In these regards, three concrete ideas were suggested:

- **Non-partisan Rule**. It was suggested that a non-partisan clause could be included in ICEG's bylaws. Such clause would prohibit any person who, within a certain number of past years, may have belonged to a political party, have sought public office, or have had any form of partisan involvement, to hold an executive position within ICEG. This clause might also be complemented by a code of honor that would have to be signed by all ICEG executives.
- **Joint Board**. In order to build credibility it was suggested that ICEG be overseen by a board jointly composed by governmental and nongovernmental representatives. This board would in particular supervise the assessment activities and the award system.
- **Outsourcing Activities**. As an approach to establish credibility, as well as to foster the cooperation between the government, the private sector, and the civil society, it was suggested that some of ICEG's activities be outsourced. This idea has in fact already been successfully implemented in other centers, like KACE, which trains and mandates citizen-volunteers to conduct organizational assessments.

Excellence Model for Iraq

Whatever specific functions ICEG ends up assuming, it will be regarded as a national authority on the topic of excellence and a reference for all public sector organizations.

A major component of this proposal is to suggest an excellence model for ICEG, comprising foremost a conceptual framework for excellence, and a consistent approach for organizational performance assessment.

As argued earlier, the concept of excellence is not culture-specific. All the existing international models discussed in the previous section are based on principles, which have been accepted universally as essential for conducting sustainable organizational reform. There is nonetheless significant value in developing a model proper to Iraq, which can be summarized in three points.

Firstly, the adoption of any concept can be significantly impeded or, on the contrary, accelerated depending on how well its presentation resonates with local codes. Thus, notwithstanding its fundamental universality, excellence gains from being introduced through a model that takes into account the cultural specificities of Iraq.

Secondly, excellence may infer an unlimited number of principles, which, nevertheless, interconnect. This is why models of excellence are generally constructed on a selected list of guiding principles, from which all others can be derived. The way this selection is made will reveal the emphases of a model, and therefore should be informed by the local context in order to ensure greater effectiveness and faster adoption by stakeholders.

Finally, some of the most prominent excellence models, like the EFQM, have a level of complexity that makes them less accessible to the non-expert in matters of organizational development. A model that is destined to be used by all public organizations in a country undergoing major institutional rebuilding should be designed with particular attention to clarity and ease of use.

The Excellence Star

The starting point in the development of an excellence model for ICEG was to design a diagram that would crystallize a set of guiding principles for public organizations. The selection process of these principles was concerned with providing a thorough characterization of “excellence”, and, as mentioned earlier, with responding to local

sensitivities. For this reason, the information collected during the stakeholder focus groups (page 24) were considered as the most adequate base to build upon.

The recommendations expressed by focus group participants revolved around four principles, which are described in the table below.

Principle	Description
Participation	▪ Consulting with citizens and government stakeholders prior to developing policy. ▪ Recognizing legitimate representatives of stakeholders and inviting them to partner in policy development and implementation. ▪ Creating systems to allow civil servants of all levels to participate in the development of their organizations. ▪ Establishing transparent systems of internal and external communication.
Foresight	▪ Translating citizen needs into consistent government priorities and long term vision. ▪ Building awareness of the resources available and the possibilities for addressing policy priorities. ▪ Formulating pragmatic and sustainable solutions.
Equity	▪ Serving equally and impartially all Iraqi citizens and organizations. ▪ Enforcing laws and regulations consistently. ▪ Ensuring that civil servants are evaluated, recognized, and promoted based on proven expertise and performance. ▪ Protecting the disadvantaged, and providing them with greater access to government services and socio-economic opportunities.
Efficiency	▪ Seeking constantly to improve the impact of policies on citizens and organizations. ▪ Utilizing resources in the optimal way to reduce costs and improve outcomes. ▪ Recognizing and empowering the most competent individuals and teams in every activity. ▪ Measuring performance on regular bases and improving strategies and procedures accordingly.

It is observed that these principles find strong echo in the results of the citizen web-survey. Hence, the principle of “Efficiency”, which infers the idea of citizen-focused policy, was roundly supported by survey respondents. The expectations of accountability and impartiality in government are, for their part, reflected in the principle of “Equity”. Finally, the importance given by survey respondents to transparency in government constitutes a pillar of “Participation”.

Another level of validation of the four principles above is provided by Iraq’s National Development Plan (NDP) for Years 2010 to 2014 prepared by the Minsitry of Planning. Chapter 12, entitled “Good Governance”, sets seven priorities for improving the State's capabilities: 1) Rule of Law, 2) Participation/Building Partnerships 3) Transparency, 4) Responsiveness, 5) Consensus Orientation, 6) Equitability and Inclusiveness, and 7) Effectiveness and Efficiency.

The principle of “Participation”, as described by stakeholder representatives, echoes the NDP’s call for more transparency, partnership, and consensus; the principles of “Foresight” and “Efficiency” address the NDP’s call for responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency; finally, the principle of “Equity” encompasses the NDP’s call for equitability, inclusiveness, and rule of law.

With these two levels of validation, one from citizens and the other from the government, the four principles described in the table above seem apt to constitute the foundational base for ICEG’s excellence model.

It was deemed important to also include in ICEG’s excellence model explicit markers of the relationships between the government and its partners. Modern thought on good governance puts significant emphasis on stakeholders both by placing beneficiaries at the Center of policy making, and by promoting the concept of participation in all government activities.

To that end, a consolidated list of four partners that a government organization should consider at all times in the process of policy making was developed. This list encompasses all the groups identified and consulted during the focus groups. The four partners are:

- **Citizens**. Iraqi citizens of all origins, backgrounds, and social situations.
- **Civil Society**. Non-governmental associations that can claim legitimate representation of citizens or other organizations, and are involved in matters of society, economy, culture, or environment.

- **Private Sector**. Individuals and organizations that drive the economic growth of Iraq, developing trade, providing goods and services to citizens, creating jobs, and generating tax revenue for the government.
- **Public Partners**. Other public organizations (e.g. ministries, governorates, universities, hospitals, etc.), with which to exchange knowledge, collaborate on policy making, and engage projects.

The eight-point star was found to be the perfect shape to combine the concepts developed above into what is proposed to be designated as “the Excellence Star” (Page 36). From a geometrical perspective, this shape allows organizing the four concepts and four partners of government around the central idea that is excellence in a clear and neat manner. Furthermore, the eight point star carries significant cultural importance in Iraq, which is reflected today by its frequent use in architecture and decorative items of all sorts.

In fact the first usage of this shape in the history of mankind was traced back to 2000 BC, in the ancient Sumerian city of Ur (تل المقير), where it appears to have been used for ornaments and seals[9]. Through the ages, the eight-point star went on to become a major Islamic ornamental pattern, often associated with the ideas of wholeness and power. It is sometimes used as a separation mark between the quarters of the Holy Quran (ربع الحزب).

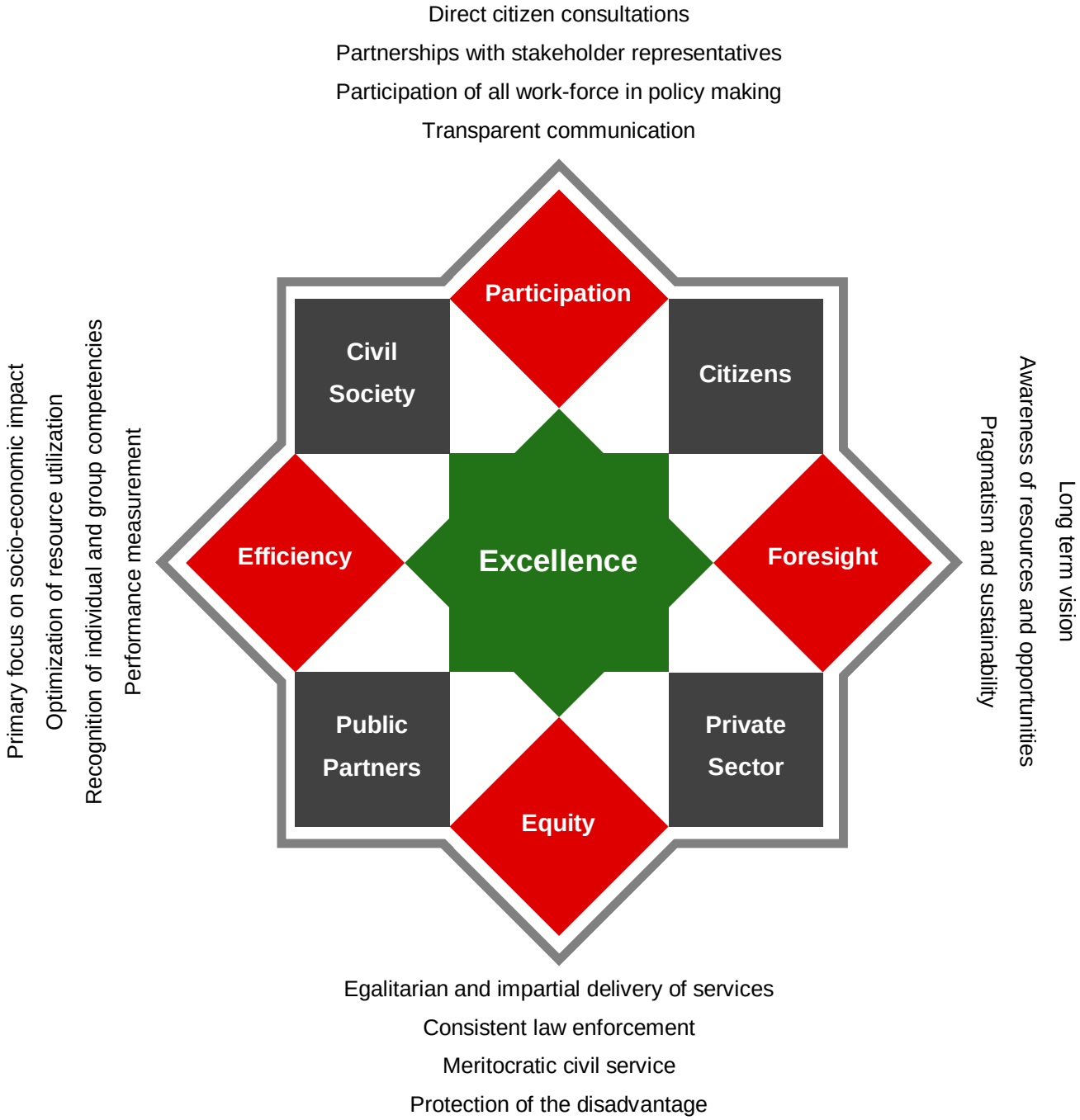
In Christianity too, the eight point star has a particular significance as a symbol of redemption and regeneration, which is commonly reflected in the shapes of the baptismal fonts.

The Excellence Star is not meant to provide alone a conceptual framework for excellence in government. The next subsection details a methodology for performance assessment, which combines the Excellence Star with a set of organizational criteria and a Balanced Score Card approach.

Nonetheless, the Excellence Star provides guidelines on how to conceive and conduct every activity, and strengthens the collective nature of policy making.

[9] Richard L. Zettler and Lee Horne, *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur*, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology.

Figure 9 : The Excellence Star, bearing the colors of the flag of Iraq



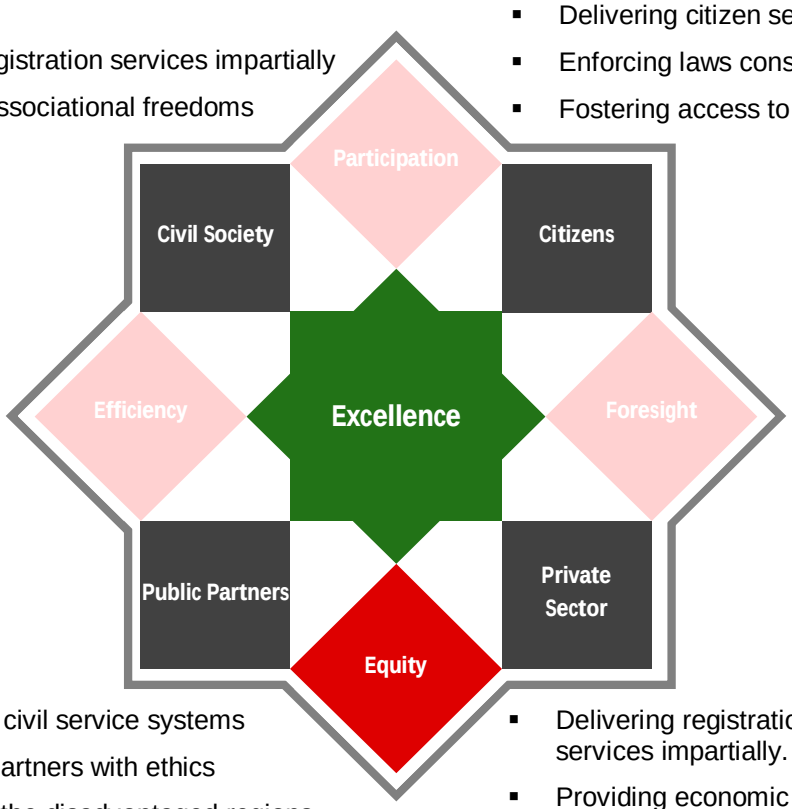
Hence, the geographic origins of the eight point star, its symbolic values, and its frequent ornamental use throughout Iraq converge to make it a particularly suitable shape for an emblem of excellence.

In addition to the Excellence Star's base diagram (Page 36), in later stages, it is suggested that more visuals be developed to clarify the relationships between every principle and the four partners, as in Figure 10 below for the principle of Equity.

Figure 10 : The Excellence Star - Applying the principle of Equity with each Partner

- Delivering registration services impartially
- Supporting associational freedoms

- Delivering citizen services impartially
- Enforcing laws consistently upon all citizens
- Fostering access to the disadvantage



- Building meritocratic civil service systems
- Dealing with public partners with ethics
- Providing support to the disadvantaged regions.

- Delivering registration and permitting services impartially.
- Providing economic support to the disadvantaged sectors.
- Dealing with government contractors with ethics.

Organizational Performance Assessment

Organizational performance assessment is an integral part of organizational development and the pursuit of excellence: It is imperative for developing consistent and effective strategies; it demands participative efforts, which contribute to building ownership and commitment at all levels of an organization; and, it fosters transparency and credibility, which are of utmost importance in government.

While the Excellence Star provides guiding principles for sustainable organizational development, this section proposes a performance assessment model to complement it, including assessment criteria and an assessment methodology.

Assessment Criteria

The diagram below combines the seven criteria proposed for ICEG's assessment model into what is suggested to be designated as the "Assessment Wheel". These criteria were developed based on the study of existing models, and with the objective to emphasize the organizational parameters that can best foster development in the Iraqi public sector.

One design feature that was inspired by the EFQM model consisted of distinguishing between what can be controlled ("Enablers") and the impact of the actions taken ("Results"). Hence, in the Assessment Wheel, all controllable criteria are arranged circularly, converging into the "Results" criterion, which occupies a central position.

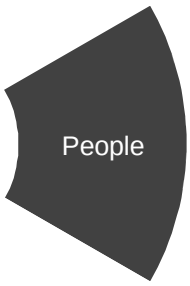
Figure 11 : The Assessment Wheel, showing the seven performance criteria

Following is a brief description of each criterion:

- **Leadership**. The leadership establishes and communicates a clear vision to the organization. It engages stakeholders, and earns their commitment to the organization's vision, mission, and values. Leaders inspire and motivate staff, act as role models, and spread a culture of development, collaboration, and professionalism.

- **Strategy**. Strategies developed reflect the organization's vision, mission, and values, and are based on a realistic assessment of opportunities. Short and long term objectives, processes, policies, and partnership plans are developed based on the established strategies.

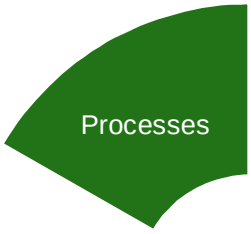
- **People**. The organization recognizes, appreciates and incentivizes exceptional individual and team performances



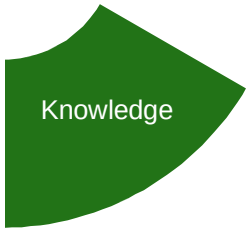
and ideas. It commits to effective management, deployment, and development of the workforce. Teams work together for a common purpose.

- **Material Resources**. Financial and material resources are used wisely and sustainably in the implementation of the organization's strategy. The organization considers the short and the long term impacts of its policies on society, the economy, and the environment. It is committed to initiating and encouraging programs that foster environmental and economic sustainability.

- **Processes**. The organization designs, develops, manages, and improves processes in a way that ensures optimal productivity in the service of beneficiaries, including citizens and organizations.



- **Knowledge**. The organization develops knowledge management systems and strategies to collect, share, disseminate and save knowledge effectively. Information is regularly collected from stakeholders, analyzed and used efficiently in the development of new policy and internal reform programs. The organization is proactive in learning from successful national and international experiences and models.



- **Results**. The organization achieves the goals and objectives that it set for itself. Its policies and programs impact positively its beneficiaries and society in general. Employees work in a healthy and incentivizing environment.

The set of performance criteria proposed above reflects a strong emphasis on sustainability. Foremost, the management of "Material Resources" was considered in a criterion of its own. This was seen as particularly relevant for the Iraqi Government, which deals with large quantities of natural resources, and for which environmental sustainability is a significant challenge.

Knowledge management also stands out as a performance criterion that is not commonly considered on its own in excellence models. This design choice was based on an analysis of opinions collected from civil servants and stakeholders on the perceived effectiveness gaps of the government in this domain. Also, the Iraqi

government is at the verge of a technological revolution, and the broad adoption of e-government systems. Such important development must therefore be specifically targeted in the performance assessments of Iraqi government organizations.

Although the concept of Results is broad and could have been broken down into several criteria, as the EFQM model does, it was decided to contain it within one criterion only. This was mostly to preserve the simplicity of the model and a manageable total number of criteria. Also, in the following sub-section, it is shown how the complexity of Results can be fully captured in the design of the assessment methodology.

Assessment Methodology

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) technique, developed in the 1990's, is proposed as the basis for the design ICEG's organizational performance assessment methodology. Foremost, it is specifically structured to assess qualitative factors of development, whose importance was discussed earlier (page 13). Also, it is particularly well adapted for the design of a standard methodology that would be applied to a large and diverse pool of organizations. Finally, it has been frequently tested for similar purposes with patent success over the past twenty years.

Essentially, on the front end of the assessment process, applying BSC would translate into providing assessors with a standard list of indicators, to each of which they would have to assign a grade based on information they would have collected about the organization. For example, an indicator could be:

The organization has a well conceived and documented vision.

In this case, the assessor's responsibility is firstly to collect the documentation that establishes the vision of the organization, as well as to discuss this vision with employees. Then, judging on the validity of the indicator above, the assessor will assign a grade using on a standard grading system.

Recognizing that some indicators maybe more important than others, each indicator will carry a certain weight. Thus, on the back end of the assessment, a weighted average of the grades of all the indicators within a defined category will be calculated.

The way proposed to combine the BSC approach with the Assessment Wheel presented earlier (page 37), consists of breaking down each of the seven criterion into a set of sub-criteria, and each sub-criterion into a set of indicators. For example, the Leadership criterion could be broken down as follows:

Leadership

L1: Vision, mission, and goals.

- *The organization has a well conceived and written vision.*
- *The organization's mission and goals are consistent with national priorities.*
- *Etc.*

L2: Values and supportive culture.

- *The Organization has a transparent, merit-based system of promotion and appointment.*
- *Etc.*

L3: Participation and collaboration.

- *Coordination with other government organizations is guided by formal arrangements.*
- *Etc.*

L4: Risk management.

- *The organization continuously reviews its strategies to ensure that they are relevant to current circumstances.*
- *Etc.*

The illustration below is a mock-up of the assessment form that would be used by assessors. The left-most column of the table (numbers in red) is where assessors would assign a grade for each indicator. In this example, it is assumed that grades are on a scale from 1 to 10. The weights of the indicators are marked in stars, from "*" for the least important, to "***" for the most important.

Also, as shown, it is proposed to link every indicator to one or several of the four foundational principles of the Excellence Star. This will clarify the link between principles and criteria, and will allow a twofold assessment: an assessment by criterion for the seven criteria, and an assessment by principle for the four foundational principles. This will also allow producing a secondary set of cross-assessments to answer such questions as:

What are the main areas and activities to develop for the organization to strengthen its participative approach?

Figure 12 : Mock-up of the performance evaluation form

Indicators grades

Indicators weights

Indicators

Foundational Principles

Sub-criteria

Criteria

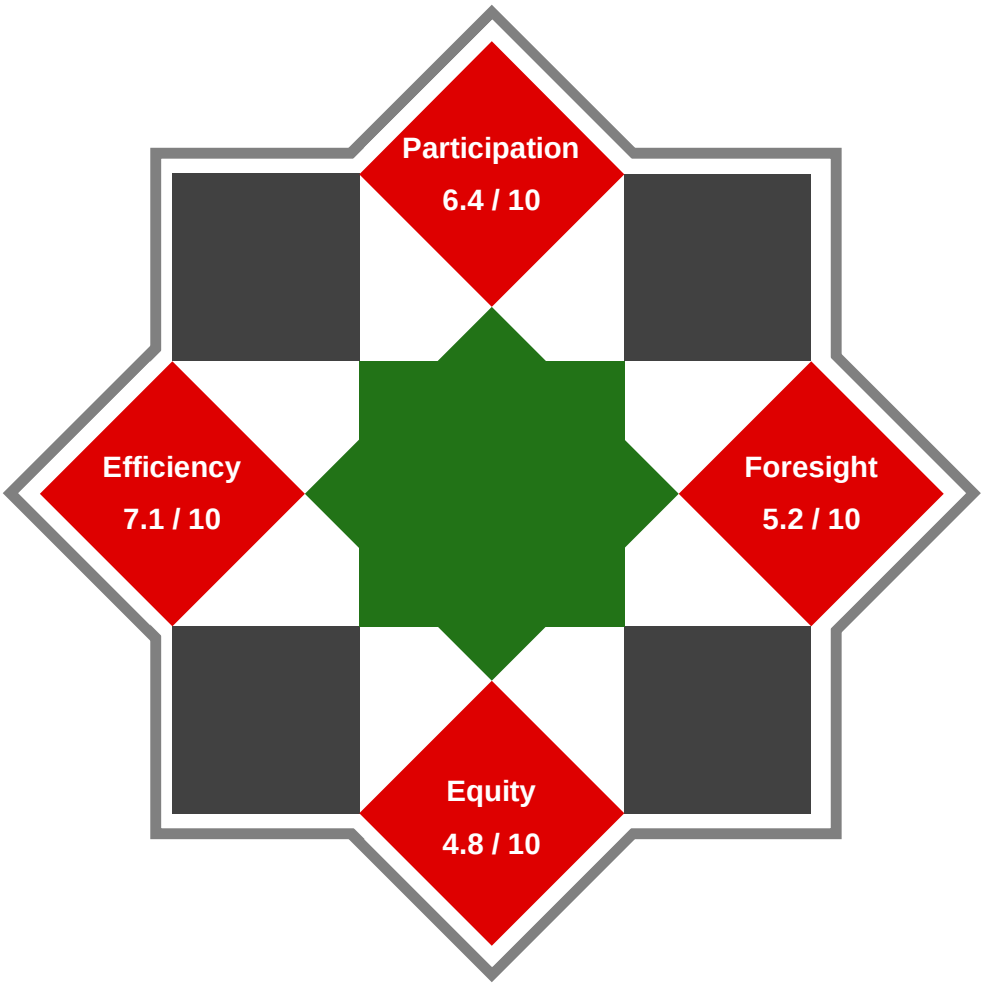
الدرجات	الأهمية	المؤشر	الكفاءة	العدالة	الرؤية	المشاركة	ت		
3	**	توجد رؤية واضحة للمؤسسة ومعروفة للجميع و قد شارك الموظفون في إعداد هذه الرؤية			√		1	الرؤية والرسالة والأهداف	القيادة
5	***	رؤية المؤسسة مدعومة ويتم تبنيها من قبل الإدارة العليا وجميع الأقسام كدليل عمل لهم			√	√	2		
8	**	تحقق الرؤيا أهداف المؤسسة وتتطابق مع الأهداف الوطنية	√		√		3		
7	***	توجد رسالة للمؤسسة ومعروفة ويتم تبنيها في جميع اقسام المؤسسة ومدعومة من الإدارات العليا			√	√	4		
7	**	يوضح بيان رسالة المؤسسة دورها ومبدأ عملها ويتوافق مع أهدافها	√		√		5		
7	**	تعتبر القيم الأساسية للمؤسسة مؤثرة وتركز على تحقيق التميز في الأداء وفقا لمبادئ خدمة المواطن وتحقيق النتائج والشفافية	√	√			6	القيم المؤسسية وتمكين الموظفين	
4	***	تنفذ المؤسسة الندوات او الدورات التدريبية التي تقدم للموظفين لزيادة الوعي لمختلف أشكال الفساد وعواقبه المتعددة	√	√			7		
5	**	توجد قنوات يمكن للموظفين من خلالها الابلاغ عن حالات الفساد		√		√	8		
6	*	تتبع المؤسسة منهجية لتشجيع الموظفين على الإبداع والأداء المتميز في تحقيق أهداف المؤسسة	√		√		9		

The following two illustrations are mockups of diagrams that would be used to summarize an organization's performance assessment results. The first is an example of how to demonstrate the average performance grade calculated for each criterion. The second is for the average performance grade calculated for each foundational principle. It also demonstrates how the average grade of a foundational principle could be detailed by criterion.

A validation of the assessment methodology's design details, as well as a full development of the performance indicators will have to be an essential component of ICEG's development plan (page 63).

Figure 13 : Mockup summary diagram of performance assessment per criterion

Figure 14 : Mockup summary diagram of performance evaluation per foundational principle



Affiliation, Mission, Functions, and Structure

Building on the research and analysis presented previously, this section proposes a design for ICEG, including the Center's affiliation, mission, functions and structure. Three goals guided this design. Firstly, it was considered necessary to empower ICEG with real authority over the Iraqi public sector. Such authority comes with the financial resources to develop effective and broad-reaching programs, and the political weight to be recognized by all public organizations as the legitimate nationwide reference on the topic of excellence in government.

Secondly, great attention was paid to proposing a design that would serve the foundational principles of ICEG, and protect it against partisanship. Despite the many initiatives to reform the public sector, rebuilding people's trust in public organizations remains a daily challenge for the government. Hence, providing from the outset systemic guarantees of ICEG's exemplarity will be an important condition for its success.

Thirdly, ICEG's proposed design aims at making of the Center an incentivizing rather than a penalizing authority within the Iraqi public sector. This distinction is seen as crucial to avoid a negative impact on the development of any public organizations. One of the concerns expressed by the government representatives consulted for this proposal was that many Iraqi organizations were not at a stage where they would be ready for performance assessment, and that such assessment may cause frustration and opposite effects to the one intended. It is believed that such concerns stem from the false idea that ICEG's assessments would be to expose and penalize poorly performing organizations to the public. However, it is in a different spirit, favoring incentivization and the promotion of successful reforms, as will be discussed later, that this proposal was developed.

Affiliation

Two options are proposed for the affiliation of ICEG: that it be a directorate at the Council of Ministers General Secretariat (CoMSec) directly reporting to the General Secretary, or that it be a directorate at the Prime Minister's Office directly reporting to the Prime Minister or to the head of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council.

Many alternatives were considered, including that ICEG be a nongovernmental organization recognized and supported by the administration, as is KACE in Jordan. The KACE model has been considered as highly successful in catalyzing the

development of the Jordanian public sector. However, this success largely depends on the country's constitutional specificities. The head of the Jordanian state is a powerful monarch who is considered to rule above party lines. His endorsement of KACE provides it with significant political authority and the credibility to operate effectively.

In the republican system of Iraq, where government positions are renewed based on regular elections, and are often held by individuals representing parties, a similar configuration would be difficult to implement. Any endorsement of a nongovernmental organization by a government office would be seriously questioned and regularly jeopardized. In addition, the civil society in Iraq continues to be weak and poorly financed. Although establishing ICEG as a nongovernmental organization could provide it with a level of independence that may be well perceived by public opinion, this alternative seems unviable both from an operational and a financial perspective.

The second alternative considered was to affiliate ICEG to the Iraqi parliament. This would present two important advantages. Firstly the Center would gain significant authority over the public sector. Secondly, it could legitimately claim a certain level of neutrality by virtue of its association with a national legislative body. However, such configuration may also expose the Center to the threats of bureaucracy. As an entity affiliated to the parliament, ICEG's staffing, financing, and strategies would have to be regularly submitted to the legislative process, and thereby undergo delays and disruptions. Hence, this alternative was not considered optimal as it would jeopardize the consistency of ICEG's operations.

Having ICEG affiliated to a high executive office seems the most effective way to ensure its political authority, operational consistency, and financial stability at the same time. CoMSec and the Prime Minister's office are both in a position to equip ICEG with these crucial assets. In both cases, however, the risk of facing a perception of partisanship exists and could jeopardize the public credibility of the Center. In the following sections, structural schemes will be suggested to mitigate this risk. In addition, a comparison of the roles and specificities of the PM office and CoMSec must be considered in light of this concern to make an optimal choice for ICEG's affiliation.

As the driver of the government's administrative reform, the Prime Minister's office would seem a logical choice for hosting an entity whose role would be to assess the development of public organizations. However, the Prime Minister's office is primarily a decisional entity prone to complete renewal after every legislative election.

CoMSec, whose main role on the other hand is to coordinate the actions of the government, may be less impacted by political changes. Ensuring ICEG's impartiality will strengthen the credibility of the main segment of its prospective activities: the award system.

Additional discussion between the government and government stakeholders may be necessary to determine the pros and cons of the two options proposed here.

Vision, Mission, and Functions

Vision (الرؤية)

The following vision (الرؤية) is proposed:

> *The sustainable development of the Iraqi public sector towards the highest levels of excellence worldwide.*

Mission (الرسالة)

The following mission statement (الرسالة) is proposed:

> *The Iraq Center for Excellence in Government encourages and guides Iraqi government organizations to reform, be innovative, and conduct development programs aimed at serving better the citizens of Iraq.*

As mentioned earlier, the nongovernment stakeholders that were consulted for the development of this proposal often suggested that ICEG take on the role of exposing poor government performances, in addition to promoting successful ones. However, USAID-Tarabot advises against this, and recommends focusing on an incentivizing role, as reflected in the message above.

Penalizing poor performances publicly may have a discouraging impact on government organizations, which, in turn, could jeopardize ICEG's effectiveness. It is also noted that the there exists already in Iraq a Commission for Integrity (هيئة النزاهة) whose role is to expose and fight corruption in the public sector. The multiplication of entities that would have the authority to penalize other government organizations on poor performance or unethical activities might only create confusion and conflict.

Goals (الأهداف)

The following Goals are proposed:

1. Promote the culture of excellence in government and its operating principles within the Iraqi public sector.

2. Establish and foster the adoption of a unified national system for organizational performance assessment in the public sector.
3. Encourage cooperation and foster positive competition between government organizations through the Iraq Center for Excellence in Government Awards.
4. Monitor the development of public sector organizations and public service delivery.
5. Recognize outstanding organizations and encourage innovation, commitment to sustainable development, and excellence in civil service.
6. Encourage international openness and the exploration of successful policy approaches implemented in other countries.

Functions (المهام)

Five functions are suggested to ensure the effectiveness and the sustainability of ICEG. It is recognized that not all these functions can be built immediately, but they establish a vision for a lasting future of government excellence, for which a development strategy is drafted in the next section. Each function is described below:

1. **Incentive Provision**. The provision of incentives is proposed as ICEG's main function. It consists of encouraging the participation and the commitment of public organizations to the pursuit of excellence in government. Different modes of incentives exist, foremost the delivery of awards to recognize exceptional achievements.

   Through the implementation of such award programs existing national excellence centers (see page 9) have raised considerable awareness of the understanding of excellence and instilled a spirit of positive competition among government organizations.

   A highly publicized award program might only be viable if the Center has acquired some maturity and has established credible authority and neutrality in the public opinion. For this, as will be detailed later, it is recommended that the incentive function be developed in parallel with other foundational functions, and that the first awards be delivered only two years after the establishment of ICEG.

2. **Monitoring**. The monitoring function is viewed as essential and complementary to the provision of incentives. Tracking the progress of organizational development activities in the public sector helps improve its

effectiveness, establish accountability, and ensure the credibility of ICEG's award system. As covered in the previous section (page 37) it is recommended that ICEG establishes a standard methodology, which it will use as a basis for the award system, and that public organizations themselves could use as a self-assessment exercise.

3. **Technical Guidance**. Although ICEG won't be in a position to provide consulting services, it will be essential for its mission that it offers technical guidance to government organizations on how to achieve organizational performance improvement. This goal can be advanced through a broad strategy including awareness raising campaigns, the organization of trainings and study tours for mid and high level civil servants.

4. **Knowledge Management**. The knowledge management function is suggested as a pillar of the national strategy to promote excellence in government that ICEG should take on. Foremost, it would aim at building nation-wide transparency regarding the performance of public organizations and their development activities. In addition, it would help create a functional body of knowledge and expertise on organizational development. Two main activities are distinguished:

   - *Knowledge sharing.* As organizations work to improve their performances, they accumulate information and expertise on how to approach the challenges of their own environments. ICEG could create the mechanisms and the incentives for such knowledge to be captured and shared across public organizations, as well as to publicize the most remarkable initiatives.

   - *Reporting of outcomes:* As mentioned above, knowledge management would also be aimed at strengthening the government's transparency and accountability towards all stakeholders, citizens in particular. ICEG could create channels of communication to inform of the outcomes of public sector reform activities, and recognize high-performing organizations.

5. **Feedback**. Beyond knowledge management, ICEG could support public sector reform by creating mechanisms by which organizations receive feedback on their actual performances, how well they are meeting their goals, and how well they are serving citizens.

Feedback mechanisms can be internal when they create a dialogue between the management of a public organization and its employees, or external when they create a dialogue between citizens and public organizations.

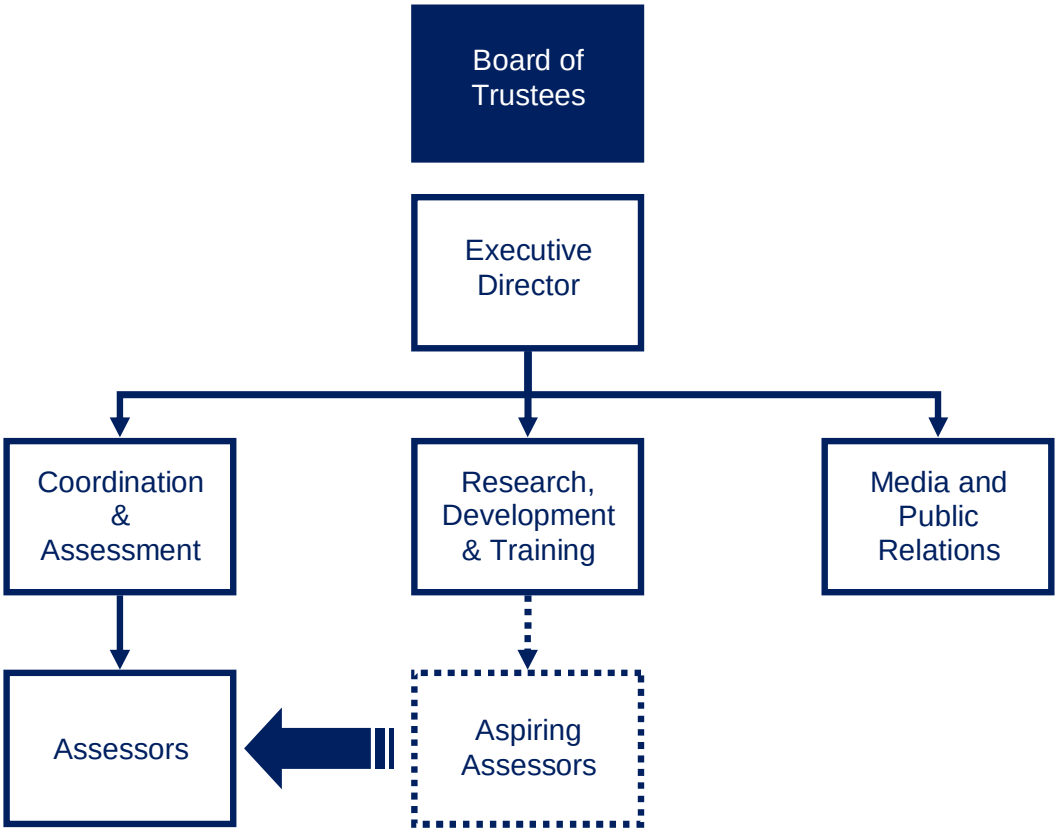
While the feedback function may be of the most difficult to develop in the early stages of the establishment of ICEG, on the longer term, it could be a crucial component to ensure its sustainability.

Organizational Design and Roles

The diagram below shows ICEG's proposed organizational structure. It was based on the Center's main functions that were developed in the previous section (page 47).

As shown, it is proposed that the leadership of the Center be shared by an Executive Director and a Board of Trustees. Essentially, the Executive Director's role would be to manage all daily activities, as well as to formulate ICEG's short and long term strategies. The Board of Trustees would act as a supervising entity, advising and validating the strategic choices proposed by the Executive Director, as well as overseeing the award system.

Figure 15 : ICEG's proposed organizational structure



A twofold benefit is expected from the presence of the Board and its mixed composition including civil servants, scholars, professional association representatives, and civil society representatives (page 50). Firstly, it will strengthen the participation of government stakeholders in the development of the Iraqi public sector. Secondly it will provide a symbolic and effective assurance of ICEG's credibility and impartiality.

Despite the significant prospective mission of ICEG, it is not expected that the Center will need a large permanent workforce. In fact, the examination of other similar organizations around the world corroborates this. EFQM reports only 17 permanent employees, and KACE only ten.

A potentially large pool of non-permanent collaborators may however be needed to support in particular ICEG's assessment operations. This is seen as an additional opportunity to strengthen the level of collaboration between the government on the one hand, and the civil society and private sector of Iraq on the other.

Board of Trustees

As mentioned earlier, the Board of Trustees' main role would be to advise and validate the strategies of ICEG. It is proposed that the Board be presided by CoMSec's General Secretary, or PMAC's first advisor, depending on the decided affiliation of the Center. Eight additional members would be designated by the hosting organization (CoMSec or PMAC) based on the following composition:

- Two high-ranked civil servants
- Two scholars
- Two civil society representatives
- Two professional association representatives (such as the chamber of commerce, the association of engineers, etc).

It is recommended that ICEG's bylaws require every designated board member to sign a code of honor. In addition to ethical clauses, this code of honor would include a declaration that the signing member will not have belonged to any political organization, nor had any political involvements over the past five years. Also, it will be stated that any organizations, to which Trustees may be affiliated, would not be eligible for an award during their tenure.

Furthermore, to guarantee the board's credibility and regular revitalization, as well as the participation of the greatest number of stakeholders, it is recommended that mandates be for a period of two years, and nonrenewable.

Following are the proposed responsibilities of the Board of Trustees:

- Validate the nomination of the Executive Director.
- Meet on a quarterly basis with the Executive Director to discuss, advise, and validate the proposed budget and strategies, as well as to monitor the progress of ICEG's activities.
- Validate the changes to the organizational performance assessment methodologies, proposed by the Executive Director.
- Examine the organizational assessments conducted by ICEG, and validate the list of organizations proposed by the Executive Director for the awards.
- Act as ambassadors of ICEG, nationally and internationally, promoting its activities, and expanding its network.

Executive Director

The Executive Director, nominated by the hosting organization (CoMSec or PMAC) and validated by the Board of Trustees is expected to have significant experience in the management of government organizations and in the field of organizational development. In addition, it is recommended that the Executive Director be required to sign an honor code similar to the one proposed for Board members, including a nonpartisan clause.

Following are the proposed responsibilities of the Executive Director:

- Assume a leadership role in coordinating between all components of ICEG including the Board of Trustees, the technical departments, and the hosting organization (CoMSec or PMAC).
- Develop and lead ICEG's short and long term strategies, using specific financial and technical objectives.
- Oversee the preparation of ICEG's annual budget and other necessary financial documents as requested by the Board of Trustees.
- Prepare quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees of ICEG's financial status, technical progress, and proposed strategies.
- Meet with the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis to report on ICEG's financial status and progress, and to submit proposed strategies for review and validation.

- Meet with the Board of Trustees on a yearly basis to present the results of the government assessments conducted, and to recommend a list of organizations for ICEG's awards.
- Oversee and support the development, design and delivery of programs and initiatives, ensuring that the goals and objectives are aligned with ICEG's mission.
- Securing the human resources, technical capacity, systems, and physical space to fulfill ICEG's mission and functions.
- Lead and motivate staff, and initiate internal development programs.
- Represent and promote ICEG's mission and functions nationally and internationally, and foster knowledge and technical exchanges with other similar organizations worldwide.

Research, Development, and Training Department

The Research, Development, and Training Department would play the vital role of maintaining, developing, enriching, and promoting the knowledge and methods, which constitute the foundations of ICEG's activities. It would also be responsible for recruiting and training aspiring assessors. Finally, it would be expected to produce general studies on the performance of the Iraqi public sector for ICEG's paper and web publications.

The Research, Development, and Training Department would be headed by a manager reporting directly to ICEG's Executive Director. Following are the proposed responsibilities of the Department:

- Stay up-to-date on organizational development knowledge and practices.
- Develop and enrich ICEG's excellence model and organizational performance assessment tools based on results achieved, and current knowledge in the field of organizational development.
- Organize awareness raising presentations to government organizations on topics of excellence in government, and on the activities of ICEG, including the awards.
- Organize training workshops for civil servants on organizational performance assessment methods.
- Recruit and form aspiring ICEG Assessors, and recommend the most competent among them to the Coordination and Assessment Department.

- Produce studies on the performance of the Iraqi public sector and on the public perception of the government.
- Provide field research data to the Coordination and Assessment Department for the preparation of organizational assessment reports..
- Coordinate with the Public Relations and Media department to develop material for ICEG's publications and website.
- Develop quarterly progress reports of activities.

Coordination and Assessment Department

The Coordination and Assessment Department would be in charge of coordinating between ICEG and government organizations. In particular, it would be responsible for running all organizational performance assessment activities. This would include managing the team of assessors who would act on behalf of ICEG in government organizations.

The Coordination and Assessment Department would be headed by a manager reporting directly to ICEG's Executive Director. Following are the proposed responsibilities of the Department:

- Coordinate with the Research, Development, and Training Department to recruit assessors who will represent ICEG in government organizations.
- Coordinate with government organizations and the Research, Development, and Training Department to arrange for awareness raising presentations, and training workshops.
- Develop detailed work plans of government assessment activities, including schedules of assessors' visits to government organizations.
- Organize and manage assessors, in particular grouping them into teams, assigning them to government organizations, and monitoring their work.
- Verify assessment reports produced by assessors and take corrective actions when necessary.
- Develop an annual report of assessment activities, including recommendations of government organizations for the ICEG Awards.
- Coordinate with the Public Relations and Media department to develop material for ICEG's publications and website.
- Develop quarterly progress reports of activities.

Public Relations and Media Department

The Public Relations and Media Department would be in charge of ICEG's promotion and communication activities. It is also expected to organize large promotional events, including the ICEG Awards ceremony.

Two important communication channels would be managed by the Public Relations and Media Department: the ICEG website and the ICEG yearly report. The website would target both the greater public and government organizations. Citizens would use it to read about ICEG's activities and stories of successful reform programs conducted by the government. Organizations would use it to download educational material about excellence in government and how to conduct performance self-assessment.

ICEG's yearly report would include foremost a general overview on the performance and development of the Iraqi public sector and public service delivery. It would also discuss successful reform initiatives conducted by government organizations. Lastly, it would include a section on the ICEG Awards ceremony, including information about the awardees.

The Public Relations and Media Department would be headed by a manager reporting directly to ICEG's Executive Director. Following are the proposed responsibilities of the Department:

- Develop communication strategies to promote the work of ICEG, as well as to spread the principles of excellence in government.
- Manage ICEG's website and yearly report.
- Organize the ICEG Awards ceremony.
- Coordinate with all components of ICEG, including the Executive Director, technical department and the Board of Trustees to collect information on the Center's activities.
- Coordinate with the Research, Development, and Training Department to post educational material and performance assessment tools on ICEG's website for download.
- Coordinate with the Research, Development, and Training Department to publish studies on the performance of the public sector, and public service delivery in Iraq.

- Coordinate with the Coordination and Assessment Department to publish stories of successful reform programs conducted by the government.
- Develop quarterly progress reports of activities.

Assessors

The role of the assessors would be to conduct performance assessments on government organizations. It is suggested that Assessors be nonpermanent staff from the civil society and the private sector, contracted for a period of two to three years by ICEG.

Such structural design would present three advantages. Firstly, it would strengthen the credibility of the Center, as assessments would not be conducted by civil servants. Secondly, it would build trust and collaboration between the government and its stakeholders. Thirdly, it would foster a permanent dialogue on ICEG's methodology enriched by the views of external professionals, which will help the Center sustain its internal development.

It is however important that assessors be carefully selected. Building a mature understanding of organizational development, and conducting quality assessments of government organizations will require university-level education, relevant experience, and personal skills.

For this, it is proposed that the process to become an ICEG advisor be composed of two qualifying steps. Candidates would first present an application to the Research, Development, and Training Department in order to participate in a training workshop. All participants in such workshops would receive training certificates. However, only a selection of the most qualified trainees would then be recommended to the Coordination and Assessment Department to be officially contracted as ICEG Assessors. As for Trustees and the Executive Director, it is recommended that assessors be required to sign a code of honor.

Throughout their tenures, assessors would report to the Coordination and Assessment Department. Following are their proposed responsibilities:

- Stay up-to-date on organizational development knowledge and practices.
- Conduct meetings with civil servants to collect data for organizational assessments.
- Conduct thorough, timely, and impartial performance assessments on government organizations.

- Report all activities to assigned supervisors from the Coordination and Assessment Department.
- Promote the mission and activities of ICEG.

The ICEG Awards

The ICEG Awards, are expected to become the main focus of the Center's activities, as well as a key instrument to incentivize government organizations and create a spirit of constructive competition in the public sector. It would also shed considerable light on the center's mission and activities. It will be crucial that the processes leading to the delivery of the awards be carefully designed to strengthen the credibility of the Center, and managed in a way that would reflect both clarity and prestige. This section proposes guidelines for this.

The awards criteria and categories should be simple, and in adequacy with the makeup of the Iraqi public sector. For this, it is recommended to create four award categories; three of them for public organizations, and one for projects:

1. **Ministries Award**. An award delivered yearly to a central government ministry.
2. **Governors Offices Award**. An award delivered yearly to a.Governor Office.
3. **Public Organizations Award**. An award delivered yearly to an organization owned and operated by the government, such as a university, a school, a hospital, a manufacturing company, an energy company, etc.
4. **Project Awards**. A set of awards delivered yearly for projects and programs undertaken by public organizations and having achieved exceptional positive impact.

Even though similar development strategies are expected from all types of public organizations (e.g. ministries, governor offices, schools, etc.), each type faces challenges and constraints of its own. For this reason, grouping all under one award would not establish conditions of fair competition. In fact, recognizing that, even within each type, organizations may be unevenly equipped with resources, it would be important to ensure that awards not be delivered based on a simple comparison of current performances but instead on a comparison of progress achieved (page 58).

The proposal to create a Project Award category addresses the observation that the most successful initiatives may sometimes be carried out by organizations whose internal development strategies may overall not be exceptionally effective. It would nonetheless be important to promote initiatives that have a significant and tangible impact on citizens. This would foster public understanding of ICEG's role, and encourage public organizations to adopt the principles it promotes.

Ministries, Governors Offices, and Public Organizations Awards

This section proposes guidelines for the design and management of first three award categories: the Ministries Award, the Governors Offices Award, and the Public Organizations Award.

Designation Process

It is recommended that the designation of the award winners be primarily based on the organizational assessments prepared by the Coordination and Assessment Department. In addition, the decision should be informed by field research conducted by the Development, Research, and Training Department, including public opinion surveys, government employee surveys, service delivery assessments, etc.

The diagram below provides an overview of the awardees designation process. Because of the importance of the outcomes, it is recommended that the Executive Director provide close supervision throughout.

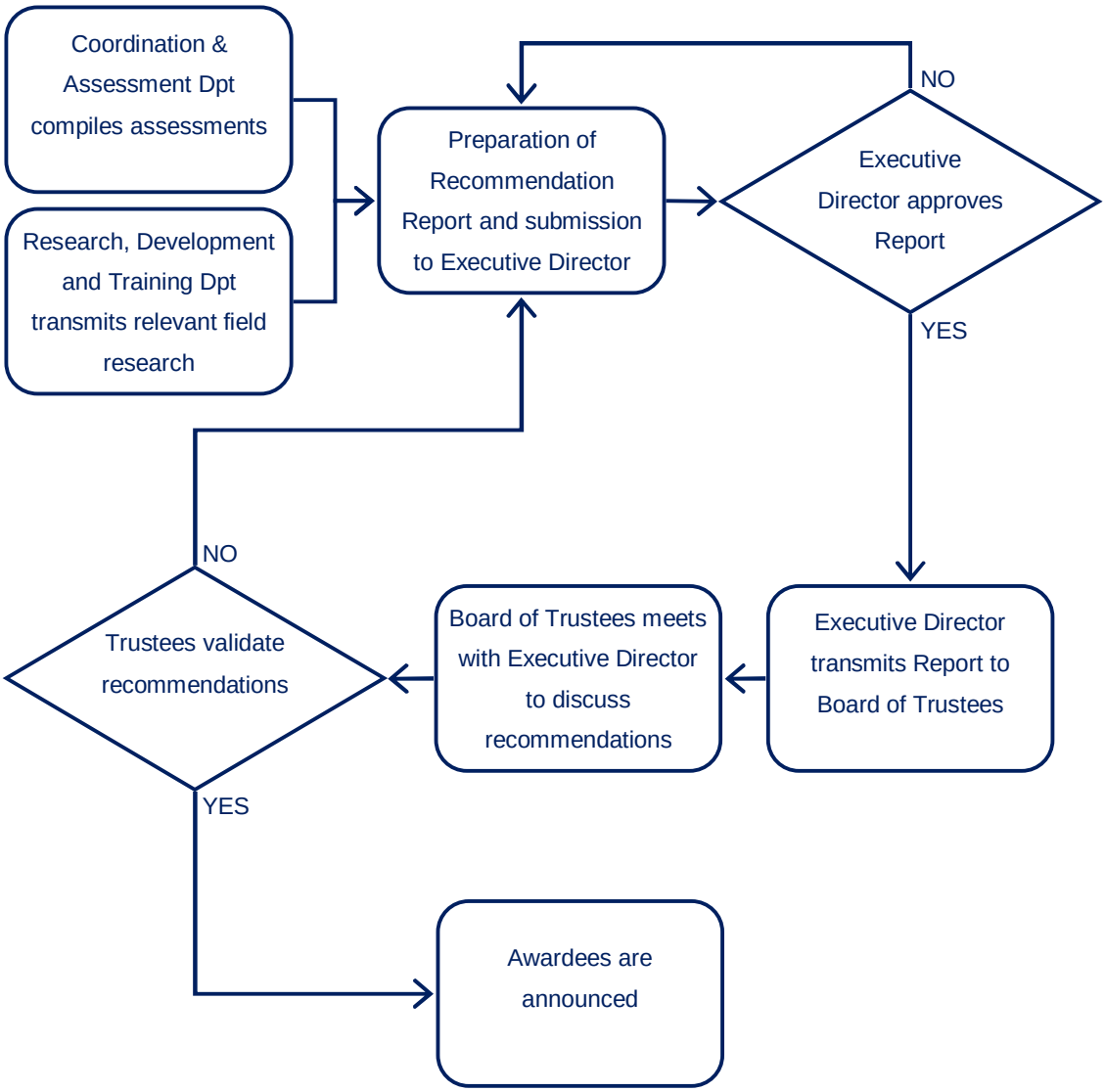
The Coordination and Assessment Department would be in charge of preparing the Recommendation Report. This task would consist firstly of compiling and summarizing the results of the organizational assessments conducted by assessors, and combining them with relevant field research conducted by the Development, Research, and Training Department.

One assessment would be produced yearly for each ministry and each Governor Office. Besides, each ministry and each Governor Office would be given the opportunity to nominate one affiliated public organization (e.g. school, hospital, energy company, etc.) to compete in the third award category. One assessment would be produced for each of these nominated organizations.

Because different organizations start at different performance levels and benefit from different amounts of resources, it is important to base recommendations on an appreciation of the progress achieved, rather than the current performance. Thus, the Recommendation Report would have as much as possible to highlight the progress made by organizations between their previous assessments and their current ones.

The report would be submitted for the approval of the Executive Director, who would then transmit it to the Trustees and call a meeting of the Board. During the Board meeting, the Executive Director would summarize the recommendations for the awards, and request the approval of the Trustees. The Trustees' responsibility would be to examine the recommendations formulated by ICEG, and ultimately validate a list of winners.

Figure 16 : Proposed awardees designation process for organizational awards

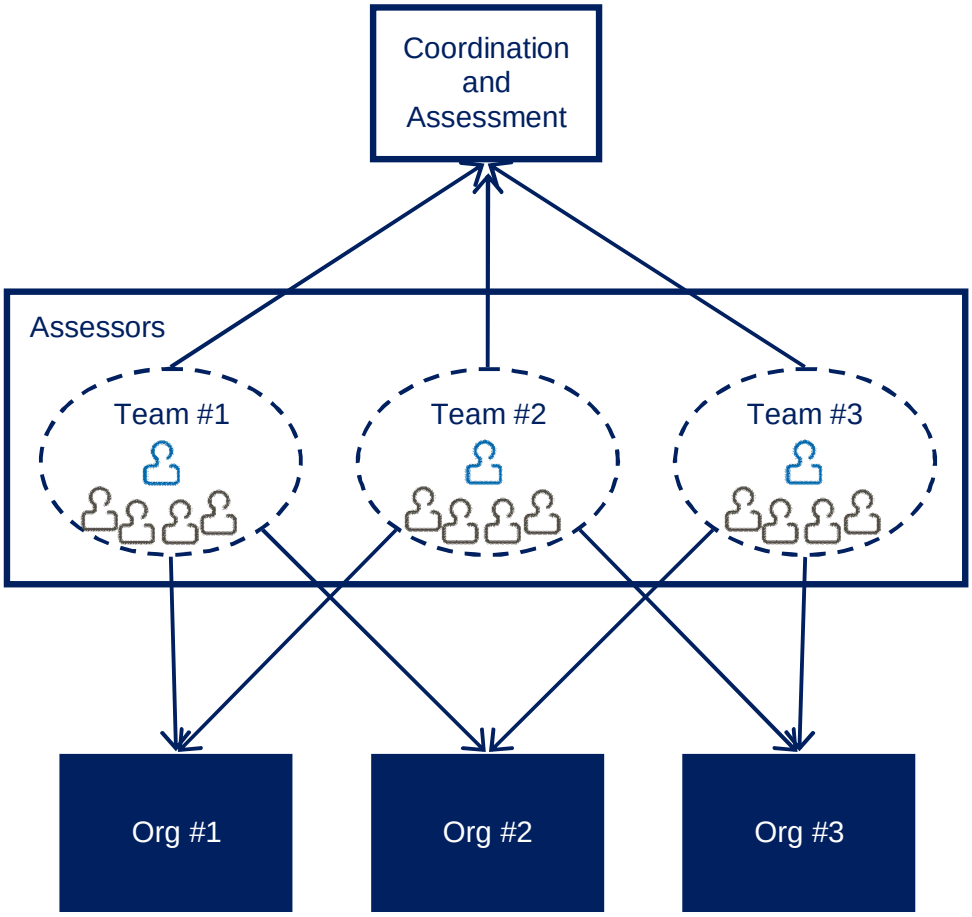


Organization of Assessors

The diagram below illustrates a proposed approach for organizing assessors to ensure the reliability of the assessment process. It basically consists of building minimal redundancy in the assessments.

The Coordination and Assessment Department would first group assessors into teams, and designate a Team leader in each, based on individual experience and technical skills. The Department would then assign to each team a set of organizations to assess, as well as an assessment schedule. This would be done in such way that every organization would be assessed at two different times, independently, by two different assessor teams.

Figure 17 : Proposed system for the organization of assessors



The responsibility of each Team Leader would be to monitor the progress of his/her team members, check the quality of their assessments, and transmit the completed assessment reports to the Coordination and Assessment Department.

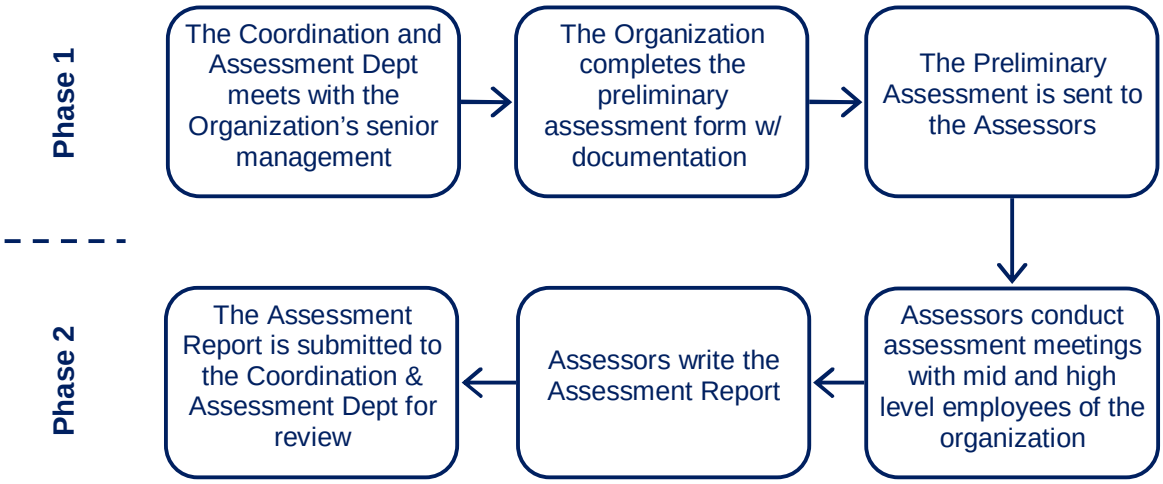
The Department would then compare the two independently produced assessments of each organization. If they would be similar, their results would be averaged into a final assessment report, and the assessment process would be marked as complete.

Should there be a significant discrepancy between the two assessments, the Department would need to take corrective action. This would consist first of investigating the differences observed, and determining if additional assessment activities would be needed. Preferably, any additional assessment work would have to be conducted directly by the Department's permanent staff, although using a third assessor team would not be excluded..

Assessment Procedure

It is proposed that the assessment procedure be conducted in two phases, as shown in the diagram below.

Figure 18 : Overview of the organizational assessment procedure



In the first phase, the Coordination and Assessment Department would approach directly the highest authority in the organization to be assessed, and request preliminary information and documentation for the assessment. The goal of this first phase is to prepare the organization for the assessment and to open the way for the assessors.

It is recommended that the information be collected using a standard form, filled in by the organization itself. It will be important to prevent that this form be perceived as a tool for inspection. Instead, it should be presented as an opportunity for the organization to demonstrate its achievements. Thus, the questions it would include might be phrased as follows:

> *In your view, what is the most successful program you have conducted this year to improve the service(s) that you deliver to citizens?*

In the second phase, the designated assessors team would hold meetings with selected mid and high-level employees of the organization, and grade the organization as per the assessment methodology discussed earlier (page 37). It is expected that around 10 to 20 meetings would be needed to ensure the quality and accuracy of the assessment.

Once all necessary information and documentation would be collected, the designated assessors team would write the Assessment Report and transmit it to the Coordination and Assessment Department for final review.

As mentioned in the previous section (page 59), should a considerable gap be observed between two different assessments conducted on the same organization, or should the quality of an assessment be insufficient, the Coordination and Assessment Department could require from assessors to revise their work.

Awards to Public Projects and Programs

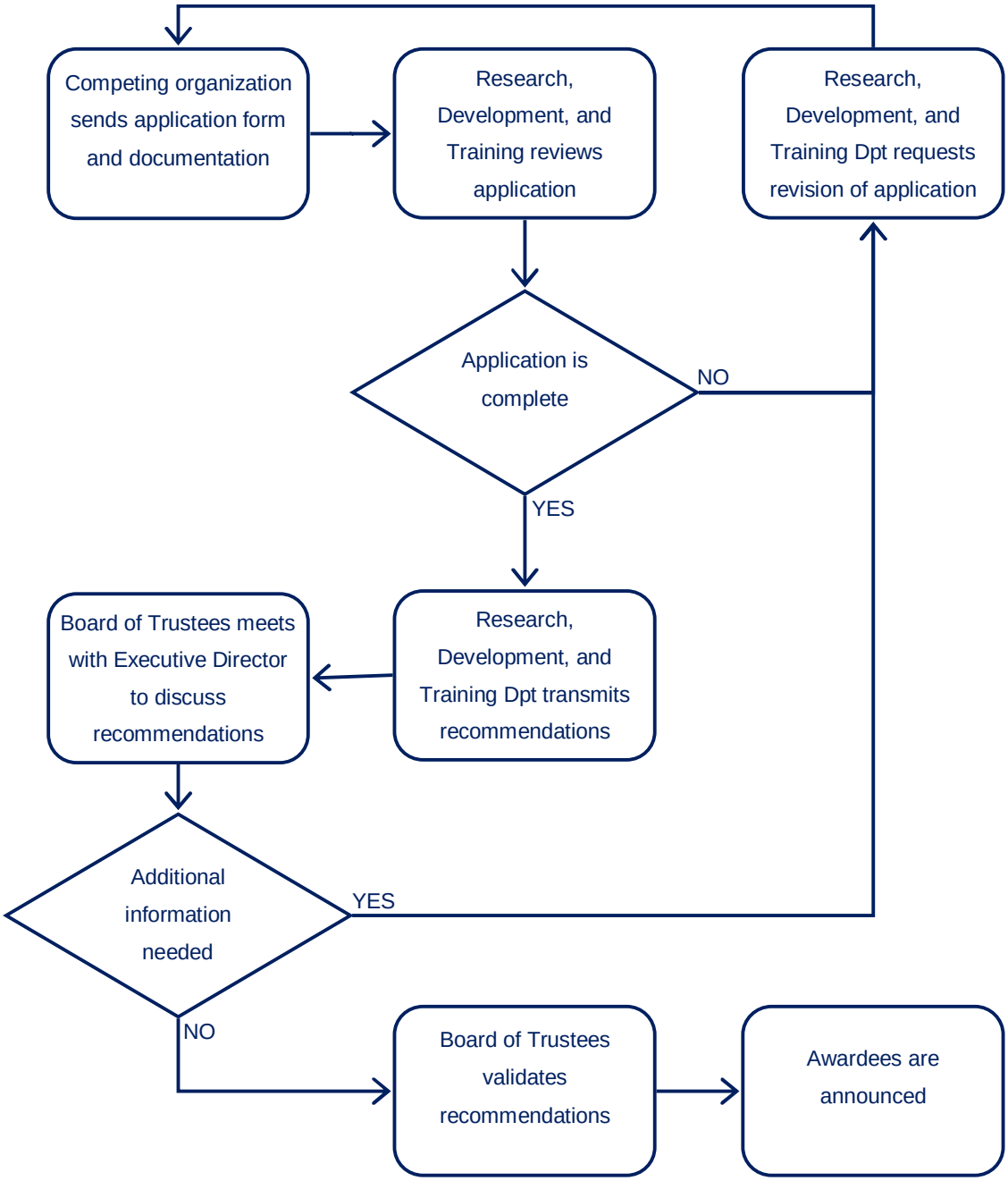
This section proposes guidelines for the design and management of the fourth award category: the Project Award.

The high number of projects and programs conducted annually in Iraq by national and sub-national public organizations prevents to assess them all. Therefore, it is suggested that participation in this award category be based on a system of self-nomination. Every year, each public organization (i.e. ministry, governor office, school, hospital, energy company, etc.) would be allowed to nominate one of its ongoing projects or programs.

It would not be possible to use the organizational assessment methodology developed previously (page 37) to evaluate the nominated projects and programs. However, for consistency ICEG should build an approach that is consistent with the principles of its excellence model. It would be particularly important to emphasize the interaction with stakeholders, and the impact produced.

The diagram below provides an overview of the awardees designation process, which would be managed by the Research, Development, and Training Department. It would require developing a standard application form to capture the scope, the approach and the impact of the competing projects and programs. Additional documentation to substantiate the answers provided in the form would be requested from the participating organizations.

Figure 19 : Proposed awardees designation process for Project Award



Positioning

Establishing the prestige of the awards would depend on two elements. Firstly, it would be necessary to secure the endorsement of the highest authorities in the government. Although they would not be involved in the designation of the awardees, they could provide strong support to ICEG's mission, especially by their presence and participation in the awards ceremony.

Secondly, ICEG's branding and advertising strategies would be critical in establishing the reputation of the awards. To this end, these activities are given significant importance in the development plan proposed in the next section (page 65). Part of this effort would be to design an award trophy, which could be achieved, for example, by organizing a competition open to Iraqi artists. In essence, what is highlighted here is that, in every step of ICEG's establishment, proper attention would have to be given to building a broad support base of stakeholders.

Proposed Development Strategy

Appendix 5 provides a preliminary work plan, which covers the essential activities to conduct in order to establish ICEG and fully develop its functions. It is divided in three phases:

- **Design Phase**. The first phase of 32 weeks would be dedicated to finalizing the organizational design of ICEG, its bylaws, its operational processes, and its technical tools. The development strategy of the center would also be refined. USAID-Tarabot will be ready to provide full technical support throughout this phase.
- **Establishment**. The second phase of 24 weeks would be dedicated to setting the foundations of ICEG, including issuing the official order for the creation of the Center, appointing an Executive Director and a Board of Trustees, and developing a detailed budget plan.

  Because ICEG is expected to operate as a directorate and with limited permanent staff, its creation should face little procedural delays. In particular, no validation from the legislative body will be needed.
- **Development**. The last phase of about 2½ years would see the full development of ICEG's five fundamental functions, and the first award ceremony.