



The Iraq Center for Excellence in Government

**The Organizational Development Unit
USAID– Tarabot
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Iraq's Experience with Organizational Development

2013?

The Iraq Center for Excellence in Government is created

2009

The National Development Plan for 2010-2014 is issued

1972

The Public Sector Administrative Development Plan is issued, and administrative reform units affiliated to the highest authority in every public organization are created

1970

The Industrial Sector Development Center becomes the National Center for Administrative Development, gaining thereby a government-wide role.

1962

The Industrial Sector Development Center is created at the Ministry of Industry and Minerals

Introduction

This document summarizes a proposal for the creation of the Iraq Center for Excellence in Government (ICEG). This proposal was mandated to USAID–Tarabot by the High Committee for Administrative Reform, presided by Mr. Thamir Ghadban.

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 strategies and accomplishments, as well as to public 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.

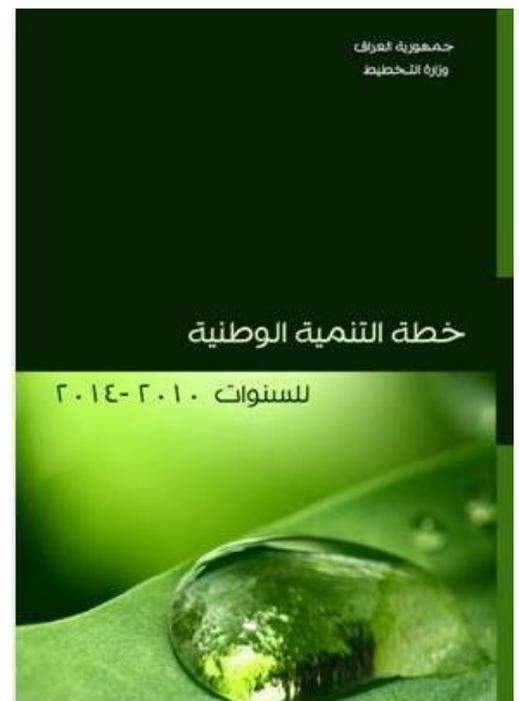
All of the above will be underpinned by an organizational design for ICEG that is based on careful consideration of the specificities of Iraqi institutional landscape.

Expected Impact

The creation of the ICEG is expected to support the Iraq National Development plan for 2010-2014 developed by the Ministry of Planning, which puts significant emphasis on governance reform. In particular, Chapter 12, entitled "Good Governance" lists the following principles to improve government at the national and local levels: Rule of law, Participation/Building partnership, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus Orientation, Equitability and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness and Efficiency, and Accountability. The adoption of these principles will in turn drive continuous improvement in the performance of public organizations and will foster a culture of excellence in the public sector.

ICEG is expected to have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction of public services in Iraq.

Moreover, ICEG is expected to foster significant improvement in the work environments of public sector organizations, thus increasing the government employees' satisfaction.



The Concept of Excellence through Time

1950

Edward Deming develops tools for organizational development that focus on improving the quality of outputs by improving on administrative and industrial processes

1960

Social scientists become increasingly interested in the study of professional organizations and start uncovering the importance social factors in organizational performance and development

1967

Rensis Likert proves that organizations that adopt participatory management system are more productive

1980

The concept of 'excellence' starts spreading particularly after the establishment of the EFQM in Brussels.

1997

Dubai establishes the first national center for excellence in the Middle East



2006

The King Abdullah II Center for Excellence is established in Jordan.



Vision and Functions

The concept of ICEG is unique in Iraq by the fact that it is based on the concept of incentivization and guidance as policy tools to motivate government organizations to create developmental programs, innovate and seek continuous improvement. ICEG's vision is therefore the sustainable development of the Iraqi public sector towards the highest levels of excellence world-wide.

Five functions have been proposed for ICEG:

Incentive Provision: ICEG would encourage the participation and the commitment of government organizations to the pursuit of excellence in government. Different modes of incentives exist, foremost the delivery of awards to recognize exceptional achievements.

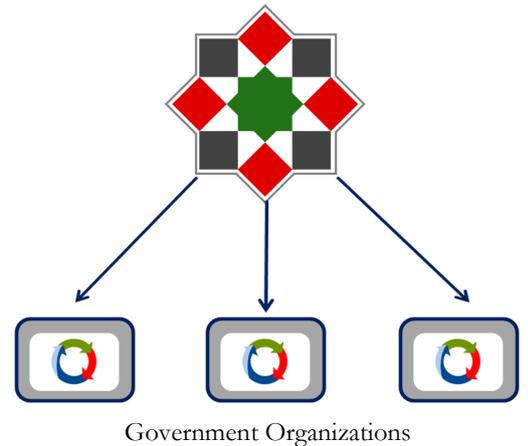
Monitoring: By tracking the progress of organizational performance in the public sector, ICEG would support its development, establish accountability, and ensure the credibility of its award system.

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.

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

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.

ICEG as the Pillar of a National Reform Strategy



ICEG Affiliation

A number of options were studied for ICEG's affiliation, including that it be affiliated to a legislative body, a high executive body, or a that it be incorporated as a non-governmental organization.

The comparative study of these three options was based on three criteria : the ability to establish ICEG's legitimacy and credibility, the level of authority it would have, and finally the availability of financial and human resources.

Based on these considerations, it is suggested that ICEG be affiliated to a high executive body as this seems the most effective way to ensure its political authority, operational consistency and financial stability at the same time.



According to the British Standards Institute:

- 86% of UAE's public civil servants say that DGEF has helped their organizations contribute to the national strategic goals.
- 93% of UAE's public civil servants say that the DGEF has helped them improve the organizational performance of their organizations.



According to the UNPAN:

- 9.5/10 of the organizations that received KACE awards improved customer satisfaction of their services by over 50%.
- 7.6/10 of the organizations that received KACE awards improved employee satisfaction by over 50%.

Organizational Structure

In accordance with the principle of Participation, which is highlighted in Iraq's National Development Plan for 2010-2014, and to ensure the center's credibility it is proposed that the leadership of the Center be shared by an Executive Director and a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees would consist of government officials, scholars, civil society representatives, and representatives from professional associations. Moreover, 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, which has proven to be a successful strategy in other countries.

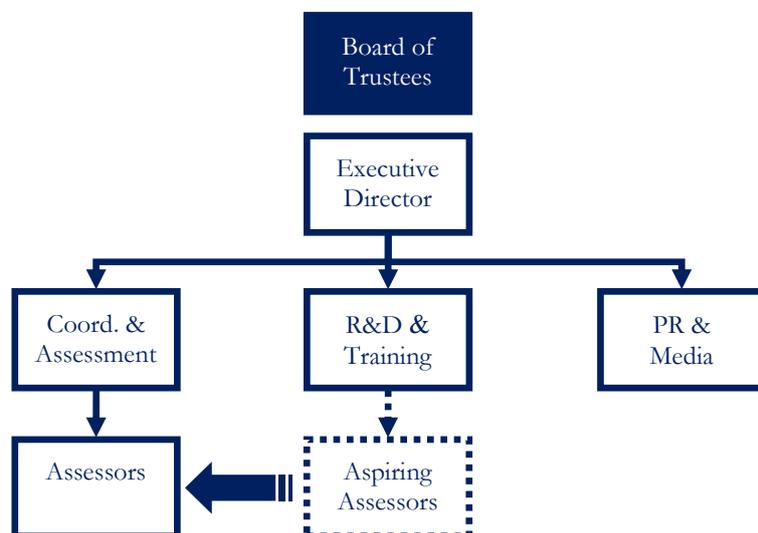
The leadership of the Center would be shared by an Executive Director and the Board of Trustees. Essentially, the Executive Director's role would be to manage all daily activities, as well as to formulate ICEG's short and long term strategies, while the Board of Trustees would act as a supervising entity. The Executive Director would supervise three departments:

Research, Development, and Training: This department would assume the important role of maintaining, developing, enriching, and promoting the knowledge and methodologies, upon ICEG's activities would be based. It would also be responsible for recruiting and training aspiring assessors.

Coordination and Assessment: This 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.

Public Relations and Media Department: This 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.





Why the Eight-point Star?

The first usage of this shape in the history of mankind was traced back to 2000 BC, in the ancient Sumerian city of Ur (Tell Al Muqeer) where it appears to have been used for ornaments and seals.

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.

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.

Excellence Model

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 model was developed based on a study of existing excellence models and consultation with stakeholders in the Public Sector. As a result four main principles were identified to orient the development of the Iraqi public sector. These are: Participation, Foresight, Equity, and Efficiency.

these principles find strong echo in the results of the web-survey and the focus groups across the country and the various social classes.



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 Ministry of Planning. Chapter 12, entitled "Good Governance". 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.

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 (Citizens, Civil Society, Private Sector, and Public Sector). 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".

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.

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. The star has the colors of the Iraqi flag.



The EFQM 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.



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

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.

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. These are:

A Comparative 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.

A 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.

Focus Groups to consult with selected government stakeholders on the topic of administrative reform in Iraq and the creation of ICEG as shown on the map below.



Stakeholders’ Focus Groups

