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# IRAQ ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PROJECT

## MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT MAY 2015

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# IRAQ ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PROJECT

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT, MAY 2015



Management Systems International  
Corporate Offices  
200 12th Street, South  
Arlington, VA 22202 USA

Tel: + 1 703 979 7100

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## ACRONYMS

COMSEC	Council of Ministers Secretariat
COP	Chief of Party
DG	Director General
DGGC	Directorate General of Government Contracts
DoD	Department of Defense (US)
FY	Fiscal Year
GO	Governor Office
Gol	Government of Iraq
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GPS	Global Positioning System
HQ	Headquarter
IT	Information Technology
KMoLSA	Kurdistan Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MoE	Ministry of Electricity
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoO	Ministry of Oil
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoTr	Ministry of Transportation
MSI	Management Systems International
NCMDIT	National Center for Management Development and Information Technology
OJT	On- Job-Training
OPDC	Oil Products Distribution Company
PC	Provincial Council
PCs	Personal Computers
PSC	Private Security Company
Qtr	Quarterly
HR	Human Resource
SBDs	Standard Bidding Documents
SCOP	State Company for Oil Projects
SQL	Structured Query Language
SSN	Social Safety Net
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United State Government

## SUMMARY

In May, USAID-*Tarabot* continued its program of administrative assistance to government entities, predominantly through the provision of hands on training, technical guidance, and specific capacity building strategies. Significant progress was made this month in several areas.

The Ministry of Planning (MoP) continues to enthusiastically take steps in the adoption of its own body of trainers and advisors in public procurement. These trainers will be the first resource in developing larger and larger technically qualified pools of government staff, to promote the continued improvement of transparency and government reform. The ten selected candidates from various government entities and ministries continue to prepare for the ILO Advanced Procurement Course in Turin, Italy, and this month USAID-*Tarabot* initiated the preliminary logistical arrangements for this important event. This training remains as a particular capstone to the procurement assistance provided by USAID-*Tarabot* thus far for this sector.

Likewise, the Ministry of Planning continues to advocate for the formal adoption of the MoP Help Desk, an invaluable tool designed as a reliable, all-access resource for government entities in need of procurement assistance. With its informal operationalization, USAID-*Tarabot* and the MoP continue to further improve its utility and function.

Perhaps the greatest progress made this month was with the Ministry of Oil. USAID-*Tarabot* is in the final stages of the oil sector rapid assessment, and with the arrival of expatriate senior advisors, the team was able to finalize data collection and begin the construction of the draft assessment report itself. This represents the homestretch of months' worth of data collection, site visits, meetings, and significant effort by both USAID and the government of Iraq (GoI). The value of this report cannot be understated; its use for not only USAID but for the GoI, and specifically the Ministry of Oil, make it a document that could affect the unfolding of future policy and international aid.

Continuing the encouraging progress of the month, the Social Safety Net program with the Kurdistan Regional Government is set to launch at the end of July 2015. In pursuit of this goal, the teams are working to improve the internet connectivity at the ministry headquarters, cleanse databases of duplicate and incomplete records, train ministry staff in the use of the SSN system, and transfer the SSN server to a location dedicated for its use.

**Events:** USAID-*Tarabot* project engaged in a variety of activities during May. The following breakdown is a disaggregation of the events:

- **Total Events:** USAID-*Tarabot* teams held (78) events; representing (5) workshop and (73) meetings.
- **Locations:** (56) of these events were held at locations in Baghdad, while (7) events were delivered in Basrah, (5) in Babil, (4) events in Erbil, (3) in Wasit, (2) in Najaf and (1) in Maysan.
- **Institutions:** a total of (18) government institutions were involved in USAID-*Tarabot* activities in May; representing (13) ministries, and (5) governorates.
- **Tarabot Technical Teams:** (58) events were implemented by Procurement Advisory Unit, (16) events were implemented by Oil Assessment Team, and (4) events were implemented by SSN Senior Advisor in Kurdistan Region.

# I. PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve Iraq's service-oriented capital investments, USAID-*Tarabot* is partnering with the Ministry of Planning (MoP) to support the Government of Iraq (GoI) to make use of its investment budget through fair and transparent procurement systems. These reforms will improve service delivery by lending efficiency and transparency to the procurement process. They will help to create an environment conducive to fair and open competition in the tendering and awarding of contracts, and build the confidence of the private sector in the government's bidding process. In the past, the transparency and efficiency of government procurement has been hindered by reliance on disorganized, paper-based systems and antiquated processes. The government needs to make concrete reforms to incorporate the expertise of international firms upon which the success of complex large projects often rests. USAID-*Tarabot* will work with the MoP to deliver complementary capacity building activities and systems reform with the ultimate goal of establishing unified procurement system aligned with international standards.

## I.1 Ministry of Planning Capacity Building

As the chief coordinating entity for public contracting in Iraq, MoP has been a longstanding partner of USAID-*Tarabot* in procurement reform, and is positioned to take the lead on Iraq's national-level procurement reform initiative. USAID-*Tarabot* took steps to prepare the ministry to do so through knowledge transfer and anchoring of sound practices. Procurement training provided for the MoP is bolstered by hands-on experience, as MoP staff partner with USAID-*Tarabot* advisors to jointly conduct workshops and other applied trainings for other GoI entities. These ongoing activities are important for MoP staff to garner knowledge about procurement and acquire training skills, which will be critical as the national reform process moves forward.

### I.1.1 Development of Public Procurement ToT Program

USAID-*Tarabot* began coordinating with the International Training Center of ILO in Turin, Italy to arrange the expert-level training course on public procurement for ten ToT graduates (5 males, 5 females). This training is scheduled from August 31 through September 11, 2015. To begin the visa process, each individual submitted a scanned copy of their passport to ILO to support the preparation of an invitation letter, which is needed to facilitate the issuance of the visas for attendees.

With the completion of the ToT in-country training last March, MoP began distributing training responsibilities to ToT graduates to train government officials on procurement regulations and standard bidding documents (SBDs). This coincides with ToT graduates' participation in site visits to GoI entities for the application of SBDs to selected pilot projects. Please refer to the sections below for more details.

### I.1.2 Public Procurement Help Desk

USAID-*Tarabot* continued supporting MoP Directorate General for Government Contracts (DGGCs) in improving the functions of the Help Desk. A revision was made to the organizational structure based on feedback provided by Dr. Azhar Hussein, Director General for Government Contracts (DGGCs).

USAID-*Tarabot* also encouraged the ministry to re-activate the use of procurement indicators to reflect compliance with MoP 2014 procurement regulations and laws, as well as to evaluate performance. The DG agreed to nominate three to five staff members from the contracts department to work with USAID-*Tarabot* in reviewing and modifying old indicators, and developing new ones.

In the meantime, MoP Help Desk continued supporting Gol entities in the following activities:

**i. Raising the awareness of Gol Entities on Public Procurement**

MoP continued to train Gol entities on procurement regulations according to its training program for 2015. One workshop was held at the National Center for Management Development and Information Technology (NCMDIT), where 65 government officials were trained on Regulation # 2 for 2014 for Implementing Government Contracts. Attendees were from COMSEC, Council of Representatives, Ministries of Health, Oil, Planning, and Governor Offices of Babil, Basrah, Najaf, and Wasit. Due to the large attendance, the participants have been divided into two groups. Miss Thikra Mohammed Jawad, a ToT graduate from MoP contracts department is taking the lead in training one of the groups.

In the meantime, MoP has expanded SBDs training to governorates and ministry directorates. Last month, MoP issued a schedule for training southern provinces. Implementation of this schedule began this month with two workshops conducted in Basrah and Maysan:

Beneficiaries	Activity	Location
Maysan Governor Office, and provincial ministry directorates	Training delivered to 40 officials (32 males, 8 females) on using SBDs for supplying goods, execution of works, and consultancy services	Maysan Governor Office
Basrah officials	Expanding technical expertise of 23 officials (11 males, 12 females) from Basrah on SBDs, by explaining the Iraqi guide for contracts, prequalification, works, goods, consultant services and health sector	NCMDIT Basrah



*Basrah officials are trained on SBDs and Iraqi Procurement Regulations*



*Maysan officials are trained on SBDs and Iraqi Procurement Regulations*

**ii. Improvements on the Standard Bidding Documents**

USAID-Tarabot continued working with the designated committee from MoP DGGC, to complete the revisions of the SBDs. Revisions were made to the following sections:

- data paper
- currency of the bids
- general conditions
- insurance for execution of goods
- awarding criteria

- withdrawing work from contractors
- conditions for giving contractors additional time
- instructions to bidders
- financial and legal forms, and
- special condition section

Once all the sections are completed, the final version of the SBDs will be translated in English.

### 1.1.3 Public Procurement Curriculum

USAID-*Tarabot* continued modifying the procurement curriculum, based on feedback from attendees participating in procurement trainings. Three documents related to the competency level are being modified. These documents are: an Instructor’s Guide, Participants Workbook and power point presentation. Once completed, modification of the advance level documents will begin.

## 1.2 Ministries and Governor Offices Capacity Building

### 1.2.1 Implementation of Standard Bidding Documents

According to MoP’s schedule for applying SBDs to pilot projects, a team of experts from the MoP Help Desk, ToT graduates, and USAID-*Tarabot* Procurement Advisors conducted site visits this month to the following Gol entities to train and mentor government officials on SBDs and its implementation to selected pilot projects.

<b>Gol Entity</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>ToT Graduate(s)</b>
Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)	Training delivered to 21 government officials (13 male, 8 female) on using SBDs. As a result, participants began applying SBDs to selected pilot project “Construction of Central Printing Building for University of Mustansiriyah”	Baghdad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rana Sami</li> <li>• Ahmed Abbass</li> </ul>
Endowment of Christian, Eizidi and Sabia’a Minda’ai	Training provided to 15 government officials (6 males, 9 females) on SBDs	Baghdad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raed Sabah</li> </ul>
Babil GO	Training delivered to 23 government officials (17 males, 6 females) from the Governor Office, and various provincial directorates on using SBDs for supplying goods. As a result, participants completed applying SBDs to selected pilot project “Purchasing a variety of machinery to Babil Water Directorate”. Also, SBDs was applied to another selected pilot project “Construction of Police Station”. This project was highly recommended by the Police Directorate	Babil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rana Sami</li> <li>• Huda Jasim</li> <li>• Ahmed Abbass</li> <li>• Yasser Mutlaq</li> </ul>
Maysan Governor Office, and provincial ministry directorates	Training delivered to 40 participants (32 males, 8 females) on using SBDs for supplying goods, execution of works, and consultancy services	Maysan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoP Help Desk</li> </ul>

Wasit GO	Training provided to 16 government officials (13 males, 3 females) from the Governor Office, and various provincial directorates on filling SBDs for supplying goods to selected pilot project "Supplying and test lamps and all accessories for modern projects"	Wasit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raeed Sabah</li> </ul>
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MoP continued issuing new schedules for site visits to ministries, and Governor Offices; to train and mentor government officials on SBDs, and its implementation to selected pilot projects. A workshop is scheduled for Babil, Diwaniyah, Karbala and Najaf officials at Diwaniyah NCMDIT on June 7-15, 2015



*Wasit officials are implementing SBDs on selected pilot project*



*Endowment of Christian, Eizidi and Sabia'a Minda'ai officials are implementing SBDs on*

### **1.2.2 Comprehensive Capacity Building for selected Ministries and Governor Offices (11 Elements Program)**

In accordance with the best international practices and Iraqi laws, USAID-Tarabot continued its broad procurement reform program with 6 GoI entities; engaging with 4 ministries (Electricity, Health, Oil/ State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), and Transportation), and 2 Governor Offices (Basrah and Najaf). This program consists of the following 11 elements, where improvements contribute to better performance:

1. Implementing Procurement Laws and Regulations
2. Have a Fully Functional Procurement Department
3. Have Qualified Procurement Staff
4. Procurement Standard Process
5. Procurement Plans
6. Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)
7. Procurement Performance Indicators
8. Procurement Records Management/Archiving
9. Reporting on Procurement Activities
10. Procurement Department Webpage
11. Subscription to dg Market

Activities under this package are implemented according to the agreed-upon action plan between USAID-Tarabot and targeted ministry and GO. Progress for each ministry and governor office can be reviewed below:

## Ministry of Electricity (MoE)

Work with the Ministry of Electricity, this month focused on the following elements:

- **Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)**

Technical assistance was delivered in developing qualification criteria for ministry projects according to best international practices and Iraqi laws. Beginning with SBDs for supplying goods, guidance was provided on instructions to bidders, and bids opening and analysis committees' responsibilities. SBDs for Turn-Key contracts were explained according to Iraqi Law.



*Developing qualification criteria for supplying goods SBDs*

Once completed, *Tarabot* advisory staff will provide technical support on preparing qualification criteria for execution of works and consultancy services bidding documents

- **Reporting on Procurement Activities**

USAID-*Tarabot* followed up with the DG for Contracts and Investments regarding ministry progress in developing procurement reports. The DG had previously approved the development of such reports, and instructed unit managers to begin gathering relevant information for this purpose. However, the units have responded slowly. USAID-*Tarabot* reminded the DG of the relevance of having procurement reports at his disposal for decision-making, and encouraged him to continue following up for these reports.

- **Procurement Department webpage**

USAID-*Tarabot* recommended the contracts section to upload the instructions to bidder's information onto the ministry website as means for improving the ministry website

- **Using dgMarket website**

As a result to the ministry using the dgMarket website, to invite global companies in bidding for ministry tenders, two internationally well-known companies received award of the contract for "Supplying Vanadium Inhibitor"

USAID-*Tarabot* COP met with the Deputy Minister for Projects, Mr. Adel Hameed Mahdi to do the following:

1. Discuss the progress made by *Tarabot* with the ministry, according to the action plan agreed upon earlier this year.
2. Discuss support and intervention from the deputy and/or minister to facilitate



*Deputy Minister of Electricity Discusses Implementation of Action Plan with*

- the implementation of joint activities.
3. Obtain feedback on *Tarabot* technical support that was provided to the ministry in various procurement elements.

The ministry and *Tarabot* both agreed that the development of SBDs for the pilot Project "Vanadium Inhibitor", and its successful launch onto the dgMarket, has resulted in the selection by the ministry of two qualified international companies to implement the contract. This is a testament to the on-going technical support of SBD.

## Ministry of Health (MoH)

USAID-*Tarabot* interventions this month with the Ministry of Health focused on the following elements:

- **Procurement Department Structure and Staffing**

The official structure proposed by MoP for contracts department was presented to the Contract Department Manager and legal consultant. The department is understaffed, and requires experienced engineers, accountants, and auditors. The department manager will address the shortage of staff with the HR Manager.

- **Implementing Procurement Laws and Regulations**

USAID-*Tarabot* directed the ministry to the MoP 2014 Regulations for implementing government contracts, particularly in regards to the guidance these regulations can provide in solving issues related to bid bonds when preparing bids. Bid bonds are part of the bidding process, where the contractor guarantees the project owner will comply with the contract terms and conditions once awarded by the tender.

- **Procurement Plans**

USAID-*Tarabot* provided technical guidance to the ministry's Contracts Department and Engineering Directorate in moving forward with updating the ministry 2015 procurement plan, as new information is provided for each project.

- **Using dgMarket website**

A follow up was made with the IT Manager to respond to his inquiry on the tender advertisements with closed deadline date. These tenders will be removed from the dgMarket if the user is not a subscriber. Methods for uploading tenders (manually and automatic) was explained.



*Preparation for updating 2015 MoH Procurement Plan*

## Ministry of Oil (MoO)

The State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP) is the main beneficiary of USAID-Tarabot technical support. USAID-Tarabot provided technical assistance in the following elements:

- **Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)**

Training and mentoring was provided to the designated committee in applying SBDs to selected pilot project “Delivery Fuel Oil to Al-Haritha & Al-Najeebiya Stations”. This committee was assembled by the DG Mr. Nihad Ahmed, and to be trained by USAID-Tarabot on applying SBDs to the three types of contracts (supplying goods, execution of works, and consultancy service).



*Draft Assessment Report for Procurement Function Discussed with SCOP Expert*

- **Procurement Performance Indicators**

USAID-Tarabot revisited the official performance indicators issued by MoP. Although MoP had instructed Gol entities to stop using the indicators over a year ago, USAID-Tarabot is engaging with the Director General for government Contracts to re-activate the use of performance indicators.

- **Procurement Records Management/Archiving**

USAID-Tarabot introduced a template for the electronic archiving system. This template requires different sets of approvals before it can be adopted.

- **Procurement Department webpage and subscription to dgMarket website**

USAID-Tarabot met with the IT Manager to follow-up on the establishment of a new web page for the contracts department, as well as a subscription to the dgMarket. The IT Manager will move forward with these two elements after coordination with the DG for approval.

## Ministry of Transportation (MoTr)

Work with the Ministry of Transportation, this month focused on the following elements:

- **Procurement Standard Process**

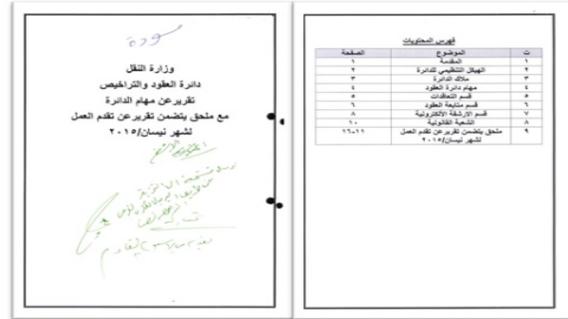
USAID-Tarabot assisted the ministry’s Contracts and Licenses DG, and Follow up Department Manager in reviewing and updating the ministry standard procurement process, so it reflects positively onto the ministry 2015 Procurement Plan. The timeframe for each phase in the standard procurement process was thoroughly observed and modified.

- **Reporting on Procurement Activities**

Building on the USAID-Tarabot technical assistance in developing procurement reports, the ministry's Contracts and Licenses Directorate drafted its first monthly procurement report for April 2015 activities. The report is currently under review by Tarabot Procurement Advisors for further improvements and enhancements before official submission to the minister and then MoP.



Tarabot advisor review the progress of MoTR monthly procurement report



Ministry of Transportation Draft Monthly Procurement Report for April 2015

### Basrah Governor Office

USAID-Tarabot followed-up with Basrah GO on the following elements:

- **Procurement Plans**

Basrah Provincial Council (PC) continues to review and partially approve projects incorporated in the 2015 procurement plan. As a result, tender announcements are made only to the approved projects from the PC. However, and due to financial constraints in this years' annual budget, projects reach the phase of awarding and are suspended until funds are allocated. The Governor Advisor for Contracting Affairs is responsible for monitoring implementation progress for the on-going projects with allocated funds.

- **Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)**

Last month, USAID-Tarabot assisted the GO in developing Terms of References (ToR) for consultancy services to select international consultancy firm to replace Hill international. The PC is still reviewing the ToR for approval.

- **Reporting on Procurement Activities**

The GO continues to use daily progress reports that show implementation progress for on-going projects and its pertaining financial status, contract type, and tendering phases (i.e. announcement, closing, opening, evaluation, awarding, .etc). Contents of these reports are partially similar to the procurement report template offered by USAID-Tarabot.

- **Using dgMarket website**

The GO continues to announce tenders for on-going projects onto the dgMarket, such as projects for construction of roads, bridges, classes, nursery, etc.

## Najaf Governor Office

Work with Najaf GO is done through its Reconstruction Commission where a follow up was made to the following elements:

- **Implementing Procurement Laws and Regulations**

Clarity provided to the Contracts Manager on the qualification criteria and bids analysis procedures according to MoP 2014 Regulations for Implementing Government Contracts.

- **Procurement Standard Process**

USAID-Tarabot is assessing the governorate adoption of the procurement standard process approved by the Governor. The governorate is following the standard procurement process that was approved by the Governor last year.



*Tarabot explain why following standard procurement process is essential hen updating procurement plan*

- **Procurement Plans**

The Governor is currently reviewing the updated 2015 procurement plan, and will be submitted to MoP once the review is completed.

- **Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)**

USAID-Tarabot reviewed the progress in applying SBDs to pilot projects. The governorate had not applied SBDs to pilot project due to financial constraints in this years' annual budget, where no new projects are available.

- **Using dgMarket Website**

Financial constrains have delayed the announcement of new tenders on the dgMarket website.

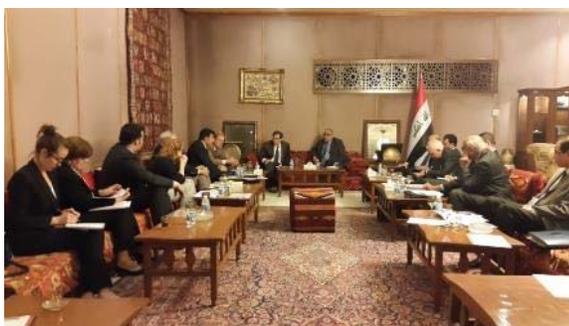
## 2. OIL SECTOR RAPID ASSESSMENT

USAID-Tarabot Oil Sector Assessment Team continued making progress on the project management, organization development, procurement, political economy analysis, and service delivery components of the assessment. Oil Assessment Team Leader Mr. Gary Vogler, and political economy specialist, Mr. Tucker Stevens arrived in Baghdad, and conducted several meetings with the team members to review the progress made for each function.

Meetings continued with Ministry of Oil (MoO), and its counterparts to refine and finalize the comprehensive oil assessment study. To achieve this, the team held several visits to the following Gol entities in Baghdad and Basrah:

- Baghdad:
  - Ministry of Oil HQ (MoO)
  - State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP)
  - Midland Refineries Company (MRC)
- Basrah:
  - South Oil Company
  - South Refineries Company
  - Oil Operation Commission

A milestone towards developing a successful study, USAID-Tarabot briefed the Iraqi Minister of Oil Dr. Adel Abdul Mahdi and his top management, in the presence of US Ambassador to Iraq Mr. Stuart Jones and USAID Mission Director in Iraq Mr. Douglas Ball and USAID and ECON section representatives on the preliminary findings of the oil rapid assessment and agreed with them on key interventions that the ministry of Oil can take with the support of USAID-Tarabot to increase the capacity of the southern export system, Midland refinery company, Southern refinery company, and to reduce leakage in the distribution of refined oil products. The briefing was given by the chief of party of USAID-Tarabot Mr. Nael Shabaro and the international oil expert Mr. Gary Vogler.



*Briefing to Iraqi Minister of Oil and US Ambassador on the Oil Study*

Both sides agreed that this assessment is a critical first step before the launch of an intensive capacity building program that USAID-Tarabot will be implementing inside Ministry of Oil over the next 12 months.

The Deputy Minister Mr. Fayyad Hasan led the meeting with the presence of USAID representatives including the USAID Mission Director in Iraq, the USAID-Tarabot COP and Oil Assessment Team Leader, and key ministry figures. The purpose of the meeting was to touch base on a few specifics of current operations, challenges, and best practices. The purpose and progress of the comprehensive oil assessment implemented by Tarabot was explained. The group agreed



*Deputy Minister of Oil Discusses Oil environments in Iraq with USAID representatives and Tarabot Tarabot team*

a monthly report would be extremely useful to aid in the collaboration of activities; to maximize the productivity of the report. The meeting concluded with caution from USAID and Tarabot on the limited capability and funding available to assist the ministry with everything the assessment report may recommend.

Previously, USAID-Tarabot had met with the steering committee chairman. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss: (1) the problems in oil contracts, (2) reasons for the reluctance of foreign investors in the oil sector, and (3) identify legislation non-friendly to the environment of the oil sector. This was followed-up with another meeting with MoO senior officials (Directors for Legal, Administration, Information Security and Permits, and SCOP Planning Manager); discussing the legislations that impede the increase of oil production and marketing. The ministry had already communicated with COMSEC on some of these legislations (i.e. unifying salaries, counting military services, daily rate, and hazard pay).

In the final week of this month, the oil team travelled to Basrah and met with DGs, department managers and senior staff for the South Oil Company and South Refineries Company to collect significant information and documents relevant to the study. They collected information on oil production, exporting, legislation, procurement, project management, and the obstacles facing each of these sectors.



USAID-Tarabot Tarabot Oil assessment team in a meeting with SRC management



USAID-Tarabot Tarabot Oil assessment team in a meeting with SOC management

With input from USAID-Tarabot COP, and senior officials (DG, department heads, and consultants) from State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), team members have amended the draft assessment reports for project management, organization development, and procurement functions.

To support the assessment, a feasibility study for one of the recommended solutions for Oil Products Distribution Company (OPDC) “GPS vehicles Tracking System” is being developed to analyze the cost and benefit for implementing this technology. This coincides with the already completed service provision chapter of the comprehensive study.

Similarly, a review is being made on the 150 investment projects for the ministry; to select some projects that have significant impact in accelerating oil production. Once this list is completed, it will be included as a short term master plan.

### 3. SOCIAL SAFETY NET (SSN) PROGRAM WITH KRG

Under this extended initiative, USAID-Tarabot is working closely with the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMoLSA), and its four main sites in Erbil, Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Garman to link and activate the SSN system.

The deployment of the SSN system continued this month with several meetings conducted, most notably with the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Mr. Mohammed Khader Mohammed. Both the Minister and USAID-Tarabot CoP agreed a target date for the launching of the new SSN system in KRG by the end of July. To reach this goal, the following joint activities were implemented:



*KRG Minister of Labor and USAID-Tarabot CoP vision for launching SSN system*

- **Improving internet connectivity at the ministry HQ**

The ministry changed its internet provider to improve service throughout the sites. The Ministry IT Manager and Tarabot SSN Advisor thoroughly tested the internet connectivity at the ministry HQ to ensure its quality. The internet provider also visited Erbil Social Welfare site to assess the internet connectivity

- **Data cleansing of current records, by removing duplicate records, completing missing information, and performing corrections**

Using the current databases, the USAID-Tarabot SSN Advisor generated error reports for all the sites. He later sent these reports to the Minister for review, as well as instructing the Ministry IT Manager to inform all sites to clean-up their records within the next two weeks. Once completed, another report will be generated using the cleaned-up databases. This will identify duplicate records, and incomplete information

- **Building the capacity of ministry staff in using the new SSN system**

USAID-Tarabot delivered on-job training to 16 officials (12 males, 4 females) from the ministry, and Social Welfare sites for Erbil, Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Garman. Participants began building the SSN infrastructure starting with installation of MS Windows Server 2008 administration. It was followed by another on-job-training on Cisco equipment. Training on SQL is planned for June, 2015.



*USAID-Tarabot Tarabot IT Advisor delivering OGT to KRG-MoLSA IT engineers on Windows Server 2008*

- **Transfer the SSN server and PCs for Erbil Social Welfare site to the new building**

USAID-Tarabot IT Manager and SSN Advisor assessed the current SSN server used by the Erbil Social Welfare directorate, and measures that need to be taken to move the server to the new SSN building. Movement of the server will begin on the first week of June, 2015.

In June, site visits are planned for Koyan, Soran and Sulaymaniyah Social Welfare sites to assess their readiness in deploying the new SSN system.

## PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

### Staffing, Deployment, Registration

During the month of May 2015, project staff increased to 39; consisting of 34 local and 5 expats.

- Two new Expat arrived to support USAID-*Tarabot* Oil Team:
  - Oil Assessment Team Leader (STTA): Gary Vogler
  - MSI Technical Director (STTA): Dr. Stevens Tucker
- MSI Technical Manager (STTA): Joe Scheibel
- Four new local staff joined the team:
  - Executive Officer: Doaa Lujain Al-Hadawi
  - Translator/ Interpreter: Mohammed Baqer Al-Tahri
  - SSN KRG Senior Specialist: Mohammed Rostam Mohammed
  - Translator/ Interpreter: Jasim Ubaid Jabir

The Finance & Administration Director has left the project. Ms. Arielle Snyder is currently supporting the project in technical and administration aspects.

USAID-*Tarabot* activities were limited during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the month; due to the pilgrimage visit to Imam Al-Kadhim. Access to nearby roads and neighborhoods were prohibited, and stricter security procedures were applied by Gol. USAID-*Tarabot* staff was instructed to work from home in-case they were unable to reach the *Tarabot* compound.

### Security

The security situation in Iraq was tense this month with ongoing fighting in the north and west of Iraq, and continued explosions and attacks in Baghdad. Most noteworthy, two explosions occurred on Friday May 29, 2015 at Babylon Hotel and Sheraton Hotel parking garage.

Military operations are still ongoing by the Iraqi Forces with the assistance of the Coalition Forces, to fight-off the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Most significantly have been military activities in the cities of Baji and Ramadi. This has not affected *Tarabot* operations in Baghdad.

### Badges/Visas

During this month, *Tarabot* processed one multiple visa sticker.

The IZ badging office ran-out of blank badges, resulting in delay in printing procedures. *Tarabot* processed four security screenings.

### Property

Two disposition requests have been submitted to USAID:

1. Sallyport have submitted an offer to buy a list of property (residency furniture, office furniture, tanks, kitchen accessories and gym equipment); which has been under their custody since MSI purchased it
2. Sensitive equipment:
  - a. List of Motorola radios, GPSs & Thuraya Phones: Sallyport have submitted an offer to buy them. The radios have been under Sallyport's custody since USAID-Tijara Project purchased it, USAID-Tijar transferred these equipment to *Tarabot* when they closed out
  - b. List of Vests, Helmets, Motorola radios, GPRS & Thuraya Phone etc....), which has been purchased by MSI. Pending instructions from USAID instructions regarding its disposition

### **The disposition of 18 armored vehicles**

MSI has 18 D class Armored Vehicles. Per US Regulations they are classified and cannot be offered or sold to the Iraqi public and private sector. However, they can be offered to the US government or to a contractor with USG.

The vehicles are registered to a Private Security Company (PSC), Sallyport Global Services because Gol only authorizes PSCs to register armored vehicles. These armored vehicles are registered with two Iraqi directorates, the Directorate of Registration and Evaluating the Private Security Companies (PSCD) and the Customs. Meaning, Sallyport is legally responsible and held accountable for these vehicles.

MSI proposed to return these vehicles directly to USAID Iraq, since they have ownership of them. But according to Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) regulations for orange plated vehicles, the PSC must donate them to the Iraqi Government or re-export them outside the country.

Although they are D class vehicles and sensitive/ classified items titled to USAID, Sallyport is obligated to comply with MoI regulations, since the vehicles are registered under their name in both Iraqi directorates; therefore, only Sallyport can re-export them for a destination determined by USAID, and then USAID destructs them outside Iraq.

Further guidance is required from USAID on the disposition of the 18 armored vehicles. Sending them to DoD posts in Kuwait may be the cheapest and simplest way to have them moved out of Iraq. However, *Tarabot* has not found the right contactor to inquire and explore this option.