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Iraq Local Governance Program – Phase III (LGP III)

**Quarterly Report
January–March 2009**

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Iraq Local Governance Program

Phase III (LGP III)

Quarterly Report, January–March 2009

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¹ RTI International is a trade name for Research Triangle Institute.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

A&E	Assessment and Evaluation
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
CIPB	Capital Investment Planning and Budgeting
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Council of Representatives
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ESRI	Environment Systems Research Institute
FOB	Forward Operating Base
GAPTIS	Governorates Accounting and Project Tracking Information System
GIS	geographic information systems
GRS	Gulf Region South/U.S. Army
HQ	headquarters
ILGA	Iraq Local Government Association
IRD	International Relief and Development (a USAID implementer)
IT	information technology
LGP III	Local Governance Program-Phase III
PC	provincial council
PPA	Provincial Powers Act
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
REO	Regional Embassy Office
SME	subject matter experts
TOT	training of trainers
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VNG	International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities [Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten]

Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Local Governance Program–Phase III (LGP III) supports the implementation of Iraq’s new *Law of Governorates Not Incorporated into a Region*. This law, passed in 2008, is informally known as the governorates law or Provincial Powers Act (PPA). It became effective with the 2009 provincial elections.

During the period of January–March 2009, the first quarter for LGP III, significant effort was devoted to program start-up, including hiring personnel, establishing offices and facilities, and coordinating with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and other USAID programs. A major focus of LGP III is to provide capacity building to provincial officials, elected January 30, and their staffs. Therefore, developing and launching the program’s annual work plan and developing a training plan for provincial officials have been the major activities for this quarter.

Work Plan Development

The LGP III work plan was developed through a series of steps: (1) workshops in Hilla and in Karrada, (2) work plan development in Basrah, (3) a cross-fertilization workshop, and (4) final revision by LGP III management and the RTI International (RTI) home office.

1. The Hilla Workshop. This workshop was held January 11–16, 2009. It included expatriate subject matter advisors, the work plan development team, Iraqi subject matter professionals, and representatives from the provinces of Babil, Karbala, Najaf, and Wasit. An average of 25 participants attended each day. The work plan development was guided by two basic documents: the LGP III Task Order and the RTI technical proposal.

Participants were divided into five groups, and each group discussed one of the LGP III proposed elements. At the end of each day, there was a wrap-up meeting to present the progress and receive feedback from the other groups.

At the end of the workshop, the participants developed a narrative and Gantt chart for the South Central region.

The Karrada Workshop. A workshop at the LGP III compound in Baghdad (Karrada) was held January 18–23, 2009, and was very similar to the Hilla workshop. An average of 25 participants from the provinces of Baghdad, Diyala, and Salah ad Din attended each day. At the end of the workshop, LGP III had a solid annual work plan for the Central region.

2. The Basrah Work Plan. A work plan for Basrah was developed by LGP III Iraqi staff in Basrah led by Dr. Esam Younis, who also participated in the Hilla work plan development workshop. The Basrah work plan was prepared in light of the two other regional work plans and was customized to fit the situation in Basrah.

3. The Cross-Fertilization Workshop. A cross-fertilization workshop attended by 35 Iraqi staff and 10 international advisors representing all provinces was held in Karrada (Baghdad) on February 3–7, 2009. Five work groups, organized around the five project elements,

discussed and merged each element to complete one national and several individual work plans for LGP III.

4. LGP III Management and RTI Home Office Review. The work plans were reviewed by LGP III management and RTI home office staff to produce a final version of the national work plan. The national work plan was submitted to USAID on February 9, 2009. Provincial work plans were updated accordingly and were submitted on February 12, 2009.

On March 10 and 15, USAID gave its comments on the submitted versions of the work plan that were incorporated into amended versions submitted to USAID on March 17, 2009. LGP III received USAID's approval on the same day. Individual provincial work plans were updated accordingly.

Training Plan

Drawing together all instances of training contained in the work plan, LGP III submitted its draft 2009 training plan to USAID on February 27. Included in the submission were a separate narrative and a table describing each session and when it was scheduled for delivery. The top training priority is that of orientation for newly elected provincial councilors and governors (basically the entire activity of Work Element 1 of the draft work plan), and it was developed using the same iterative methodology through exchange visits of international and Iraqi program staff between the two project hubs.

The main topics covered in the training plan are as follows:

- The PPA, provincial budget preparation and execution, and quality of services delivery;
- The geographic information system (GIS), the Governorates Accounting and Project Tracking Information System (GAPTIS), and training needs assessments of provincial councils (PCs) and governors' offices;
- Training of trainers (TOT) to prepare LGP staff for training PC and governors' office staff on various topics; and
- Organizational assessment and development.

Specialized training material in public finance based on the PPA was prepared by the regional finance advisors. The material includes the modules for the trainers and the trainees in accordance with Work Element 1 of the work plan.

Development of Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)

During this quarter, the assessment and evaluation (A&E) senior advisors conducted field visits to LGP III regional hubs in Hilla and Baghdad to begin the process of collecting basic information from subject matter experts (SMEs) who can assist in developing

1. Project assessment tools for assessing the PCs and governors' offices; and
2. Indicators that measure PC's and governors' offices performance.

Through A&E representatives in Salah ad Din and Basrah, a similar dialogue was conducted for both assignments. As a result, field staff recommended that assessments begin once the newly elected PC members are seated, a governor chosen, and an agreement is made with both the PC and governor's office.

With collaboration from senior management and SMEs, the A&E senior advisors began the process of developing the Performance Monitoring Plan, which will explain the roles and responsibilities for the A&E department. An important component of the plan is performance indicators, which the program is in the process of developing with the help of RTI home office personnel.

Highlighted Activities By Province

Mosul

On February 17, 2009, LGP III was expanded to include Ninawa province. Work was begun there quickly to catch up with progress in the other provinces being served by LGP III. Within 30 days, LGP III had completed the following:

- Established the LGP III expatriate presence, located within the Ninawa PRT on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Maerez;
- Hired a core local staff;
- Identified and secured office space within the Ninawa Provincial Hall to conduct meetings;
- Conducted initial training with hired staff;
- Created a Ninawa-specific work plan at a mini-conference at the Karrada compound;
- Met with the outgoing governor, Said Kashmula, and the expected incoming governor, Atheil Najefi, to introduce LGP III and start to build connections to the program;
- At Karrada, provided mentoring in administration, IT, GIS, and GAPTIS, as well as for reporting and program management, to the newly hired Mosul office staff, along with their Central region counterparts, on March 15–18, 2009; and
- Met with Mosul provincial officials at the Karrada compound on March 15–18, 2009, to explain the development of new features of GAPTIS; and
- Identified possible permanent locations for local staff within Mosul.

North Central Region and Baghdad

- In Baghdad, Salah ad Din, and Diyala, LGP III staff talked by phone and held informal meetings with the newly elected council members to begin creating channels

of access for the LGP III work program. In one such call, Dr. Salah Salim Abdul Razak, who is likely to become the Baghdad PC chair, said, “We are in need of the services of LGP III.”

- On March 17, LGP III staff made a formal presentation on the governorates law and the Iraq Local Government Association (ILGA) to all of the Baghdad PC members at the Alwiyya Club.
- LGP III selected a location for an office in Diyala that is located on the grounds of the PC headquarters and will provide easy access to council members.
- LGP III created a 2009 staffing plan for Baghdad, Salah ad Din, and Diyala provinces and advertised new positions to support the program in these provinces.
- In Diyala and Salah ad Din, LGP III translated MS Project work plans for the provinces into Arabic for the benefit of non-English readers.
- At LGP III’s Karrada compound, the program held the first of two management training sessions with the Chief of Party (COP) for Central region managers on March 9, 10, and 16.
- In Baghdad and Diyala, LGP III staff met with the PRT Baghdad on February 11 and the PRT Diyala on February 27, to introduce the LGP III program of work to the PRT leaders.
- GAPTIS staff from LGP headquarters (HQ) and the provinces performed assessments of the current status of GAPTIS use in Baghdad, Salah ad Din, and Diyala. GIS and service-delivery monitoring staff identified new staffing needs, based on the work plan, and developed draft assessment tools.
- The potential impact on LGP III activities resulting from the resignation of the Baghdad provincial governor and Baghdad city administrator were analyzed.
- Tracking of the budget execution for Diyala, Salah ad Din, and Baghdad provinces continued. This data is available with an average delay of three months.
- Recruiting of local finance staff in Diyala and Salah ad Din continued.
- An analysis of the potential funding for Baghdad, Salah ad Din, and Diyala provinces, resulting from the recently approved 2009 annual budget, is ongoing.

South Central Region

- LGP III staff participated in USAID coordination efforts by presenting LGP III to the PRT, USAID, and other USAID implementing partners (e.g., International Relief and Development (IRD) and Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) working in provinces in the South Central region. The main purpose of this work was to create an environment for better cooperation and coordination among USAID programs in the region.

- LGP III regional staff organized a week-long workshop held during February 2–8, 2009, to assist the LGP National Training Department in developing eight orientation sessions for the newly elected PC members and governors. These sessions included an introduction to LGP III and the PPA, planning and budgeting, oversight, legitimacy, funding, and tools. During the workshop, participants developed materials that will be used in presenting LGP III to the newly elected PC members and governors. This presentation will take place through several orientation sessions across the region in the next couple of months.
- On March 7, the Karbala PRT held a ceremony honoring the newly elected PC members. Speakers at the ceremony included the PRT Team Leader, the governor of Karbala, and representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Office and LGP III. The ceremony was attended by the newly elected Karbala PC members; university professors; a regional embassy office (REO) representative; and representatives of the Karbala PRT, local civil society organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Karbala Investment Commission, and LGP III.
- Regional GAPTIS staff conducted an assessment in the five provinces in the region on equipment, staffing, and data entry related to GAPTIS.

South Region

- LGP III staff held various informal meetings with new Basrah PC members to explain LGP III's work and objectives and the support the program can provide to the PC and governor's office.
- On March 5, at the LGP III compound in Basrah, LGP staff, in coordination with the Basrah PRT, conducted a coordination meeting among donors, the USAID Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), and the LGP III COP and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP). Donors participating in the meeting included representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, USAID's Tatweer Project, Gulf Region South/U.S. Army (GRS), and the Basrah PRT.
- On March 2 and 3, LGP III started the assessment process for the current GIS system in Basrah by visiting the departments of Water and Municipality. LGP III and these departments' GIS staff shared their GIS information between them at these visits. In addition, LGP III followed up on Environment Systems Research Institute (ESRI) online training in these two departments, as well as in Basrah's Municipalities and Land Registry departments.
- On March 2, LGP III GIS staff assisted the Land Registry Department in Basrah by responding to a request to provide technical support to solve problems with the department's plotter.
- The process of digitizing and aligning property boundaries of Basrah city to satellite imagery is going well, and LGP III GIS engineers assess that 85 percent of the work has been done.

Progress of Major Activities

LGP III's work plan for 2009 includes five major elements that are listed below, along with major activities conducted this quarter in support of the work elements.

Work Element 1: Governor and Council Orientation

LGP III Training Catalog. The Training Catalog is one of LGP III's deliverables to USAID. This catalog includes brief descriptions of each of the topics selected by technical advisors for the eight orientation sessions for implementation of Work Element 1.

Session 1: Introduction to PPA and Introduction to LGP III

Session 2: PC Legislation

Session 3: Planning

Session 4: Budgeting

Session 5: Monitoring

Session 6: Resources: Legitimacy

Session 7: Resources: Funding

Session 8: Resources: Tools

A first draft of the catalog will be submitted to USAID at the end of March.

Orientation Materials for Implementation of Work Element 1. Draft materials have been prepared and will be finalized before the end of March, and TOT will be conducted for trainers who are selected to conduct the orientation sessions for PCs and governors' offices.

To prepare these materials, three groups composed of technical advisors and staff representing LGP III provinces were organized. These groups met in Hillah on February 2–8 for six days of group and plenary sessions and materials preparation. A group of legal and training specialists prepared materials for Work Element 1; a group of fiscal advisors and planners prepared materials for Work Element 2; and a group, including the ILGA advisor and the services delivery team, prepared materials for Work Elements 3 and 4.

LGP III staff began preparing and translating these orientation materials and assigning tasks to those staff who will present these training modules to new PC members.

Work Element 2: Capital Investment Planning and Budgeting (CIBP)

In January, LGP III staff from the various regions met at the LGP III Karrada compound to begin a common work plan for fulfilling Work Element 2. In early February, a narrative accompanying the work plan was completed for submission to USAID. Also in February, LGP III staff developed a draft performance measurement plan for Work Element 2, and in March, staff began developing capacity-building materials for this Element.

LGP III staff from the North Central region identified new staffing needs based on the work plan and draft assessment tools. Staff in Basrah collected information on budget execution in the province for use in training provincial officials.

GIS Work Plan. Issues raised in February resulted in a revised GIS projects work plan being submitted to USAID in March 2009. The focus of the revised work plan is to concentrate resources in two provinces (Salah ad Din and Basrah) so that these provinces can attain the ability to apply GIS fully to their planning efforts for the next fiscal cycle.

Work Element 3: Services Delivery and Performance Improvement-Oversight and Accountability

Development of the GAPTIS Work Plan for 2009. LGP III GAPTIS staff developed a work plan for 2009 that provides an Iraq-wide timeline of project implementation and program objectives. The work plan, which will be used for program planning nationwide, consists of four elements:

1. GAPTIS Provincial Assessment
2. Planning and Budgeting
3. Implementation
4. Evaluation and Monitoring.

GAPTIS Help Desk. This quarter, LGP III established a GAPTIS help desk, based at the LGP HQ, staffed by the help desk administrator. LGP III's plan is to make the help desk the central repository for all information regarding GAPTIS version control and all reports. The help desk will also become the central call center that will be the single point of contact to clients and the field coordinators needing functional support.

GAPTIS Workshop. LGP III held a two-day GAPTIS team workshop in Karrada compound on February 24–25, to prepare the LGP III field coordinators to upgrade provincial systems and conduct user assessments. The GAPTIS database programming team also presented a new method to upgrade provincial systems in the future. LGP III plans to have coordinators in the field to perform most of the future system upgrades to streamline the Iraq-wide system maintenance process.

GAPTIS Office in Karrada. LGP III established a GAPTIS office in Karrada to provide a direct link to Baghdad province and the Amanat. The office is manned by LGP's fiscal team. This office will also provide fiscal-related technical assistance to LGP's programming team, the field coordinators, and provincial officials.

Conduct National GAPTIS Assessment. LGP III conducted an Iraq-wide GAPTIS provincial assessment in February and March 2009 to identify the status of system use in each government entity. The assessment will be used to help LGP III plan all future provincial implementation activities, such as additional programming and training needs throughout the year.

GAPTIS Retraining for Provincial Officials. The GAPTIS team and the LGP III field coordinators provided retraining assistance to most provinces during the month of March, including the non-LGP III provinces, to help promote the usage of the system. The additional

training was necessary because most provinces had not used the system during the past couple of months while they were performing year-end closings and addressing other issues related to the provincial elections.

Work Element 4: Local Civil Service, Organization and Operation (GO & PC)

In the North Central region, Salah ad Din and Diyala provinces identified new staffing needs, and provinces developed draft assessment tools.

Work Element 5: Support Institutions for Sustainability (ILGA)

Formal ILGA Assessment. LGP III staff developed a draft concept note and assessment instruments (sets of questionnaires and the ILGA assessment benchmarking instrument modeled on the international framework developed by subcontractor RTI subcontractor, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), and held several working sessions with the assessment and evaluation staff from headquarters to discuss and review the documents. The actual assessment will be carried out at the start of the second quarter.

ILGA Legal Status. On March 4, LGP III staff met with Ms. Wafa'a Fadhil Abdul Hasan, a member of the ILGA Board of Directors, and also an influential member of the association's Legal Committee. She was re-elected as a member for the Muthanna PC during the recent provincial government elections. The meeting reviewed the five options for the formal legal status of the ILGA that were originally proposed in August 2008:

1. Registering the ILGA as a nongovernmental organization, according to the regulations of the Registration Office
2. Submitting the draft of the LGA special law to the Council of Representatives (COR) according to the authorities granted to the PC under Article 61 (1) of the constitution.
3. Considering the amendment of the PPA by inserting an article or schedule providing for the ILGA
4. Proposing a constitutional amendment to include an explicit reference to the ILGA
5. Registering the ILGA under the Unions Law.

LGP staff reiterated the significance of pursuing formal legal status. Ms. Wafa'a committed to support the process by leading a select group of ILGA directors (both outgoing and incoming) in the next two weeks to push for the submission of the draft of the ILGA special law to the COR once the PCs are reconstituted.

Deliverables and Reports

During this quarter, LGP III delivered the following:

- January Monthly Report, February 5, 2009.
- LGP III Annual Training Plan for 2009, February 27, 2009.
- February Monthly Report, March 5, 2009.
- LGP III Work Plan, February 10, 2009.
- LGP III Performance Monitoring Plan, March 30, 2009.
- LGP III Quarterly Implementation Plan , March 16, 2009
- LGP III Training Catalogue, March 30, 2009

RTI does not utilize a probationary period for its expatriate staff. Additionally, RTI's Performance Management and Salary Review Schedule, in which the performances of all expatriate staff are evaluated, is scheduled for completion on March 27, 2009. In conjunction with that schedule, LGP III will submit, during the first week of April 2009, a performance summary statement and recommendation to USAID for each LGP expatriate who has been working on the project for at least 60 days.

Problems and Delays Affecting Performance

This quarter, LGP III and its staff experienced a variety of challenges and constraints that, in their aggregate, can affect LGP III's overall effectiveness and efficiency in meeting its primary goal of supporting local government capacity building. Major issues include the following:

- Waiting for the seating of the new PCs and their election of a chairman has slowed LGP III efforts to begin conducting assessments of the new councils.
- Encountering difficulties in finding qualified staff for new positions, especially expatriate key positions.
- Encountering problems with locations designated for LPG III, specifically in Babil, where some PC buildings are not adequate and some still under repair.
- Dealing with confusion concerning military aircraft flight privileges, resulting in scheduling and appointment problems.

Work Plan for the Next Quarter

LGP III's work plan for the second quarter of 2009 focuses mainly on the orientation of elected councils and staff of governor's offices. In addition, assessment and planning activities under Work Elements 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be conducted. Details of activities planned for the quarter are as follows:

Work Element 1: Governor and Council Orientation

- Conduct orientation for the PCs and governors
- Introduce the ILGA and Prime Minister's High Commission on Local Government to LGP III
- Provide indirect support to LGP III "non-focus" provinces.

Work Element 2: Capital Investment Planning and Budgeting (CIPB)

- Support the PCs to plan and budget for the Capital Investment Planning and Budgeting (CIPB).
- Support the PCs to plan and budget for materials and tasks
- Coach PCs on the implementation of CIPB activities
- Build capacity of the governors' offices and PCs to implement Provincial Capital Investment Planning for 2010
- Technical assistance on Provincial Capital Investment Planning for 2009
- Technical assistance on Provincial Capital Investment Planning for 2010.

Work Element 3: Services Delivery and Performance Improvement-Oversight and Accountability

- Measure and report service delivery performance
- Introduce and assess service delivery concepts
- Plan and budget for service delivery performance measurement pilots
- Implement service delivery performance measurement and reporting program.

GAPTIS

- Assess the current status at the provincial level
- Plan and budget for the activities that need to be implemented.
- Implement GAPTIS activities.

- Conduct two user workshops to enhance technical skills of provincial staff and strengthen the users' network.

Work Element 4: Local Civil Service, Organization and Operation (GO & PC)

- Assess the needs of PCs
- Provide coaching to PCs on planning and budgeting
- Provide coaching to GOs on planning and budgeting
- Provide consultancy to the PCs and GOs on PPA implementation

Work Element 5: Support Institutions for Sustainability (ILGA)

- Facilitate and support ILGA in core functions
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation.