



[IRFFI/UNDG IRAQ TRUST FUND (UNDG ITF)]
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM May 2010 TO May 2012

Programme Title & Project Number	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Programme Title: Developing Iraqi Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Data, Information Systems and Analytical CapacitiesProgramme Number (if applicable): A5-30MPTF Office Project Reference Number:	
Participating Organization(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO)United Nations Industrial Development organization (UNIDO)	
Programme/Project Cost (USD)	
Total approved budget as per project document:	USD 1 340 000
MPTF /JP Contribution:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">by Agency (if applicable)	
Agency Contribution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">by Agency (if applicable)	
Government Contribution (if applicable)	USD 500 000
Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable)	
TOTAL:	USD 1 840 000
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.	
Evaluation Completed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy	
Evaluation Report - Attached	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy	

Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results	
<i>Iraq</i> Agriculture and Food Security Sub-Sector : Agriculture and Water Resources	
Implementing Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ministry of Agriculture.Ministry of Planning and Development Coordination.Ministry of Water resources.	
Programme Duration	
Overall Duration (months):	24 Months
Start Date :	26 May 2010
Original End Date :	26 Nov 2011
Actual End date :	31 May 2012
Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Expected Financial Closure date:	31 May 2013
Report Submitted By	
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Iraqi agriculture sector has been declining steadily in terms of production and productivity since 2002. Nevertheless, it remains the second largest contributor to Iraqi GDP after oil revenues and has the potential to play a key role in reducing poverty and unemployment in Iraq. The Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS) and the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) have mandated a comprehensive reform of the agricultural sector, including the reduction of State subsidies, the development of effective agricultural markets, and private sector led growth. Currently, there are significant sector specific “gaps” in planning information, which hinders the Government of Iraq (GoI) from effectively developing agricultural policies and implementing agricultural interventions. Without accurate agriculture and agro-industry data, private sector entrepreneurs and investors are also reluctant to embark on business ventures in the agriculture sector.

In addition, there is no functional agricultural statistical system for producing accurate, relevant and timely statistics on crop, livestock and agro-industry production on a regular basis with standard statistical methodology. Major sector-specific gaps currently exist, thus weakening planning efforts to support policy makers in effectively developing agricultural policies. Lack of reliable agriculture data is also impeding any form of measurement on the impact of national and international agricultural interventions.

The Government of Iraq is focused on sustained growth of income, particularly for rural people, and the agriculture sector is responsive to improvements in service delivery providing the greatest social and economic returns. Therefore, strengthening agricultural statistical systems would enable the Government in designing more sustainable rural development policies. Through the provision of appropriate resources, technology, training and methodologies for technical assistance and capacity building, the proposed project will address the lack of data collection and analysis necessary for effective agricultural policy development. The project’s main objective is to strengthen Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology’s (CSO) agricultural and agro- industry information services through the provision of capacities to produce comprehensive, reliable, and timely information. The information would also support the Iraqi private sector for necessary business planning, investment and development.

FAO and UNIDO reviewed CSOs’ current operational capabilities and identify key areas of under-developed capacities and needs. Through capacity-building training to CSO staff their technical skills and expertise in data collection increased and they were provided with the technical skills to translate data collection and results into data analysis and reporting. In order to ensure sustainability of the project, FAO and UNIDO conducted training sessions to sensitize policy makers on the importance of data and information management and how to use the information in agricultural planning and policy development.

The main outcome of this project was to achieve increased institutional capacities in the field of agriculture and agro-industry data collection and analysis, which meets international standards and using practically sound statistical methodologies, techniques, concepts and classifications. After building the capacity of the ministry staff, CSO established a functional database to support the dissemination of food, agriculture and agro- industry statistics. Reliable data helped to enhance the GoI’s planning and execution of agriculture sector reforms, improved understanding of food security issues and supported private sector participation in the agriculture and agro-industry sector.

I. Purpose

The project’s main objective was to strengthen CSO’s agricultural and agro-industry information services, through the provision of capacity building activities, to produce comprehensive, reliable, and timely

information. The project focused on improving technical capacities through training CSO's to conduct weekly agricultural data collection, agricultural and agro-industry data analysis, reporting, and dissemination of the information.

II. Assessment of Programme Results

JP Outcome 1: Contribute to enhanced production and productivity in the agricultural sector

Output 1: GOI is better able to collect and analyze agriculture data for effective planning in agriculture sector.

- Identification of information needs and information gaps in consultation with key stakeholder groups, namely the major information users and policy makers.
- Building the technical capacity of CSO/KRSO and the MOA in the field of agricultural data collection and analysis in the identified areas of need. In this regard three training courses were conducted as follows:
 1. Training on Data Analysis was successfully conducted in collaboration with the National center for agricultural research and extension (NCARE) from 21 January - 3 March, 2011. 6 Iraqi experts provided 3 training courses as follows:
 - Excel Data Analysis for Statistics Professionals and Planning Departments within MOA, MOWR and MOP/CSO, for 2 Days.
 - SPSS for Statistics Professionals and Planning Departments within MOA, MOWR and MOP/CSO for 3 Days.
 - SQL for of Statistics Professionals and Planning Departments within MOA, MOWR and MOP/CSO for 5 Days
 2. Training for 15 participants from MOA and CSO on Questionnaire Designing, Data Collection and Analyzing using PDA and SPSS was successfully conducted from 29 May until 7 June 2011 in Amman, Jordan was. The main objectives of the training programme were:
 - How to use the advanced statistical techniques in questionnaire design and Personal Digital assistant, the assumptions made by each method, how to set up the analysis using SPSS and how to interpret the results.
 - Provide the participants with the knowledge and skills that contribute to the development of administrative capabilities and raising the effectiveness of their performance, and promoting positive attitudes they have towards their responsibilities.
 3. Training on "GIS, Remote Sensing, Small Harvesting Tools and Digital balance" was completed in Amman in coordination with National Centre for Agriculture Research and extension for 5 trainees from CSO from 14 - 27 November 2011. The general objective of the training course was to increase capacity of trainees to enable them to develop more reliable methodologies and techniques related with "GIS, Remote Sensing, Small Harvesting Tools and Digital balance".

Output 2: GOI is better able to collect and analyze agro industrial agriculture data for effective planning in agro industrial sector.

FAO Component:

- The final questionnaire were designed, completed and signed off on, methodology for survey and project agreed on. Business Rules and Coding for PDA programming are also completed.
- Technology gaps identified and procurement specifications agreed on for PDA and Laptops which were needed to complete evidence based work in this project and future work plan of CSO. Procurement of computers for data collection and reporting were completed. Procurement of 60 PDAs and five lap tops devices were procured and received officially by CSO.
- The quality of the census data is the outcome of deploying the modern technologies in data collection, processing, and communication, therefore procurement of services (Personal Digital Assistant software) and related trainings focus on the accuracy, completeness, consistency and integrity will took place and training course about using the PDA device/software was conducted in Iraq, for fifteen participants from CSO.

UNIDO Component:

- UNIDO built the capacity of CSO/to produce agriculture and industrial statistics reports and publications.
- Agro industry report writing training commenced and the training components and TOR were agreed upon between the partners.

Output 3: GOI Agriculture and Agro- Industry Development and Investment Strategy.

- CSO conducted data collection, analysis and reporting with support from FAO/UNIDO.
- CSO will analyze data with expertise support from FAO/UNIDO.
- Build the capacity of CSO/to produce agriculture and industrial statistics reports and publications.
- CSO trained in analysis of agriculture and agro-industry data with technical reporting abilities improved.
- The main output of the project was the combined Agro-Industry Development and Investment Strategy report. This was prepared by CSO, FAO and UNIDO where they employ jointly the results of the pilot agriculture and industry censuses which were conducted under the project. The end result of the project, the data and reports, will be disseminated to all stakeholders, including, GOI, MOP, MOA, MOI, and Iraq Private Sector in order to help stakeholders and decision makers in development planning and policy making.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

GOI is better able to collect and analyze agriculture and agro-industry data for effective planning in agriculture sector	Identification of information needs and information gaps in consultation with key stakeholder groups, namely the major information users and policy makers.	100 %
	Building the technical capacity of CSO and MOA in the field of agricultural data collection and analysis in the identified areas of need, several training were conducted in this regard.	100 %
Data Collection Methodology Agreement, Coding, and Business Rules	The final questionnaire design and questions completed and signed off on, methodology for survey and project agreed on along with timeline of activities. Business Rules and Coding for PDA programming are also completed.	100 %
Specifications and Procurement of training and PDA/computers for data collection and reporting	Specifications have been agreed on for the PDA, computers, and the training programme. Procurement were completed and the PDAs and laptops were delivered.	100 %
	Procurement of services (Personal Digital Assistant software), The technical specifications were endorsed and the services were delivered.	100 %
Current agriculture production levels and potential identified from survey results	CSO conducted data collection, analysis and reporting with support from FAO/UNIDO	100%
	CSO analyzed data with expertise support from FAO/UNIDO	100 %
	Build the capacity of CSO/to produce agriculture and industrial statistics reports and publications	100 %
	CSO trained in analysis of agriculture and agro-industry data with technical reporting abilities improved.	100 %

The implementation and management of this program was the responsibility of both agencies involved: FAO as the lead agency and UNIDO in partnership. FAO managed the agriculture portion of data collection, analysis, and reporting, while UNIDO supervised the agro-industrial components of these activities. CSO was responsible for the data collection in Iraq.

CSO remained responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting. FAO and UNIDO supported and guided CSO at every stage of project implementation. FAO and UNIDO provided overall guidance to the agriculture and agro-industry data collection through its expertise available, supported by specialized technical missions as required. FAO and UNIDO personnel were located in Baghdad and received technically and operational support by the Programme Management Team, made up of, UNIDO and FAO technical experts and project manager, in Iraq and in Amman.

The project managed at different levels as follows:

1. Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The project steering committee (PSC) chaired by MOPDC/CSO, and comprised of FAO, UNIDO, MOA, MOIM, and possible representatives from the private sector. The PSC was responsible for oversight of programme implementation and to provide general policy guidance of the programme. The PSC met on a quarterly basis.

2. UN Coordination

FAO and UNIDO coordinated their roles towards the survey's support under the programme leadership of FAO, through their participation in the STC.

3. Responsibilities

Since the project was an effort in capacity building and ownership by Government of Iraq, supported by FAO and UNIDO, the following division of labor delineates the responsibilities of each partner:

CSO: developed survey plans, tools, managed the survey and coordinated the day-to-day work of the surveyors and was responsible for the data analysts.

Line Ministries and relevant stakeholders: ministries involved participated in identifying the survey indicators; contributed to identify the detailed informational and technological needs in doing the survey properly and identified qualified CSO participants for the training.

FAO: Managed the programme, led the UN side, and coordinated the outside training and capacity building activities and provided the quality assurance and the technical backstopping. The role of FAO was identified in the following aspects:

- a. Capacity building of CSO in Collection, Analysis and Reporting
- b. Technical backstopping provided by FAO in coordination with UNIDO and CSO
- c. Coordinating the UN effort to help Iraqi national in terms of capacity building, training, study tours, technical revisions, etc.
- d. Quality assurance through mobilizing the quality assurance of the implemented activities by CSO
- e. Managing the steering committee and the technical committee in coordination with CSO

UNIDO: UNIDO assumed the following responsibilities, using their own respective core resources:

- a. Capacity building of CSO in Collection, Analysis and Reporting by CSO
- b. Coordinating the UN effort to help Iraqi national in terms of capacity building, training, study tours, technical revisions, etc.
- c. Quality assurance through mobilizing the quality assurance of the implemented activities by CSO
- d. Provide overall technical assistance
- e. Participate in the Programme steering Committee and technical committee

In order to assess the progress of project activities, in-house financial and narrative progress reports were used on a regular basis. One such report was a monthly field activity report to follow-up on the project activities in relation to the work plan. Another report was a monthly report provided by the financial department of the Iraq offices of both UN agencies detailing the expenditure of project funds. A Project Management Unit (PMU) with offices in Amman, Jordan evaluated these reports along to monitor and assess the progress of projects.

The implementation of this project was also supported by the FAO Project Task Force (PTF) meetings held with the lead technical units. These units had the prime responsibility of ensuring that technical supervision is provided and maximum results achieved during the project implementation, notwithstanding the challenging operating context and remote management. A number of project activities such as trainings and study tours had been carried out outside of Iraq to ensure the safe encounter between FAO technical officers and Iraqi experts involved in the project implementation.

In addition, there were Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings. The PSC meetings took place regularly (at least once every six months) in the FAO-Iraq, Amman office. Given the complex operating context and challenges posed by the security situation in Iraq, the PSC meetings were used to discuss problems as well as achievements while ensuring full transparency and accountability of activities throughout project implementation.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Contribute to enhanced production and productivity in the agricultural sector.			
Output 1.1: GOI is better able to collect and analyze agriculture data for effective planning in agriculture sector Indicator 1.1.1 Information needs assessment of Agriculture and Agro-Industry seasonal production data completed. Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes	Achieved	N/A	Project progress reports
Indicator 1.1.2 Number of Ministry of Planning/CSO staff (male/female) trained in agricultural data collection and analysis using new technology Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 15-25	Achieved	N/A	Training reports
Indicator 1.1.3 Capacity development needs assessment available Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes	Achieved	N/A	Project progress reports
Indicator 1.1.4 Database with relevant data on food security and agricultural available Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes	Achieved	N/A	Project progress reports
Output 1.2: GoI is better able to collect and analyze agro- industrial agriculture data for effective planning in agro- industrial sector. Indicator 1.2.1 Number of Ministry of Planning/CSO staff (male/ female) trained in agro-industrial data collection and analysis using new technology. Baseline: Surveys of current capacities to determine training needs. Planned Target: Identification of key training needs and gaps for staff in data collection.	Achieved	N/A	Training reports
Indicator 1.2.2 Baseline data collected; Existing data reviewed; Baseline: Studies and assessments on current agro- production levels. Planned Target: Identification of agro-industry production potential.	Achieved	N/A	Ministry reports

<p>Output 1.3: GoI Agriculture and Agro-Industry Development and Investment Strategy. Indicator 1.3.1 National Agricultural and Agro Industry strategy drafted. Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	Achieved	N/A	Ministry reports
<p>Indicator 1.3.2 Number of statistical reports on agro-industrial data produced and disseminated Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2</p>	Achieved	N/A	Combined reports.

iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken relating to the programme and how they were used during implementation. Has there been a final project evaluation and what are the key findings? Provide reasons if no programme evaluation have been done yet?

The main output of the project was the combined Agro-Industry Development and Investment Strategy report. This was prepared by CSO, FAO and UNIDO where they employ jointly the results of the pilot agriculture and industry censuses which were conducted under the project. The end result of the project, the data and reports were disseminated to all stakeholders, including, GOI, MOP, MOA, MOI, and Iraq Private Sector in order to help stakeholders and decision makers in development planning and policy making.

- Explain challenges such as delays in programme implementation, and the nature of the constraints such as management arrangements, human resources etc. What actions were taken to mitigate these challenges? How did such challenges and actions impact on the overall achievement of results? Have any of the risks identified during the project design materialized or were there unidentified risks that came up?

A program change of scope requested due to rejection of the idea of standalone agriculture survey with the newly planned Agriculture Census 2011 by CSO in 2011. Based on the newly committed Census by CSO, it was decided with CSO that the most beneficial route would be to avoid duplication and to instead support the much more comprehensive Agriculture Census 2011 through this project. Although, UNIDO's weekly agro-industry production mapping remained the same, as well as the training component of the project. The main change was the switch from Survey to Census design.

Justification

This project has played an important role in developing analytical and information capacity of government counterparts in Iraq, which accommodated evidence based approach to developing agricultural and agro-industry strategy. Furthermore, it was much more beneficial to conduct a pilot census rather than a standalone agriculture survey, to provide a more substantial use of the project for Iraq.

It was recommended by Ministry of Planning/CSO that the project cannot be continue as a standalone Agriculture Survey due to its danger of repetition of already planned Agriculture Census 2011 to be conducted by CSO. Therefore, based on the rejection letter of the Agriculture Survey which was initially proposed and the recommendation in the technical meeting from CSO to support the Agriculture Census 2011 instead, the project scope was modified. The scope of the project was therefore changed. Subsequently repetition of efforts has been avoided and the project has provided important support to the Agriculture Census 2011, through training and procurement, and avoiding repetition of efforts.

The request from GOI was to conduct through the project a full official agriculture survey questionnaire, instead of a customized small scaled FAO agriculture survey, which resulted in an important contribution by the project. The difference between the census and survey being the sample size and the number of indicators and questions used in the census which was much higher, and gave a much more realistic picture of the agriculture sector in Iraq. Therefore, with the scope change, FAO contributed more to the work of GOI through the training, questionnaire design, and procurement through this project by having conducted the sample testing within 4-5 governorates of phase I of the full census that CSO conducted.

After the second technical meeting with high delegations from CSO, it was decided to transform the project questionnaire which was based on agriculture survey basis (customized FAO/CSO questionnaire), into a pilot agriculture census. This served a greater purpose, by providing training, procurement, and pilot study for the full Agriculture Census (that was done in 2011 by CSO). Not only, this solved the problem of any repetition that could occur with a standalone survey, but also the project provide essential support in the complementation of the full census by providing support in training, procurement, questionnaire design, methodology, and field testing.

- Report key lessons learned and best practices that would facilitate future programme design and implementation, including issues related to management arrangements, human resources, resources, etc. Please also include experiences of failure, which often are the richest source of lessons learned.

FAOs' experience has shown three main lessons that were taken into account in the design of the programme:

1. The main lesson learnt during the implementation of this project in Iraq was the need to address the challenges of remote controlled implementation and the need to improve the preparatory phase with national counterparts and gain a firm commitment from each implementing partner. Therefore, this project was designed to have project implementation completely moved to Iraq, with one National and one International Officer who will ensure the daily follow up in Baghdad, Erbil and Najaf, as well as the work of a number of national experts in charge of the different components of the project. The intensive preparatory phases of the program first of all focus on the implementation framework with defined roles of each stakeholder including the creation of Project Steering Committee and organization of Kick-off meeting.
2. Another important lesson learnt from our experience was that of implementing field programmes are always challenging due to security issues. It is difficult to conduct a survey in areas which are less secure; however these issues were to some extent mitigated through use of CSOs' expertise to work under such conditions.
3. One of the most important lessons learned as regards agriculture and agro-industry data collection and analysis is to emphasize on the importance of training process of Ministry staff. The process of acquiring agriculture statistics is an ongoing activity and the information acquired will influence policy-makers decisions, given the importance of this information in the decision-making process.