

**FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
IRFFI/UNDG IRAQ TRUST FUND (UNDG ITF)**

<p align="center"><b>Participating UN Organization(s)</b></p> <p><i>(if joint programme, indicate the lead agency)</i> UN-ESCWA, UNESCO</p>	<p align="center"><b>Sector(s)/Area(s)/Theme(s)</b></p> <p>Cluster B: Education and Culture</p>
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<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Title</b></p> <p>Iraqi Networking Academy Project</p>	<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Number</b></p> <p><b>B1-10</b> <i>(previously C1-10)</i></p>
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<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Budget</b></p> <p><b>UNDG ITF: \$4,000,000</b>      USD (\$ 1,000,000 for the first year)</p>	<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Location</b></p> <p><b>Region (s):</b>                      Throughout Iraq</p> <p><b>Governorate(s):</b>              Baghdad, Basra, Mosul</p> <p><b>District(s)</b></p>
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<p align="center"><b>Final Programme/ Project Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation Done</b>    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes      No <b>Evaluation Report Attached</b>    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Timeline/Duration</b></p> <p><b>Overall Duration</b> <i>12 months, Aug 04 – Aug 05</i></p> <p><b>Original Duration</b> <i>36 months</i></p> <p><b>Programme/ Project Extensions</b> <i>None</i></p>
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**Report Formatting Instructions:**

- Number all sections and paragraphs as indicated below.
- Format the entire document using the following font: 12point \_ Times New Roman & do not use colours.

## FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

### **I. PURPOSE**

- a. Provide a brief introduction to the programme/ project (*one paragraph*)

The Iraqi Networking Academies Project (INA) is a UNDG-ITF funded project, which started August 2004 and ended in August 2005.

Networking academies are learning centers for Cisco educational courses: the Cisco Networking Academy Program (CNAP) provides students with internationally recognized certifications, such as the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and IT Essentials. The main goal of the project is to establish 4 regional networking academies (RNAs) in Baghdad (2), Basra (1), and Mosul (1). Each of these academies is responsible for establishing a specified number of local academies (LNAs) in several universities, colleges, and training institutions. The total planned number of local academies is 40, distributed throughout Iraq. The Academies are expected to train and certify 50 instructors and 1,500 students every year.

- b. List programme/project outcomes and associated outputs as per the approved Project Document.

Outcomes:

- Provide the Iraqi people with the opportunity to receive Networking education;
- The project will contribute to the restoration of the ICT education system in Iraq

Associated Outputs:

- 4 Regional Networking Academies were established in 4 major Universities in Iraq (2 in Baghdad, 1 in Basra, and 1 in Mosul);
- 6 Local Networking Academies were established;
- Training of trainers of RNAs;

- c. List the UN Assistance Strategy Outcomes, MDGs, Iraq NDS Priorities, ICI benchmarks relevant to the programme/ project

This project directly addresses the issues of education, higher education, job opportunity and creation, promoting gender equality and building partnerships. This project also indirectly supports capacity building for developing applications that target health, environment, and better life quality. These are all part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These issues are also a part of the mandates of the partners involved (ESCWA and UNESCO).

Also, education and higher education are priority sectors in the UN Assistance Strategy to Iraq, the National Development Strategy of Iraq, and the Millennium Development Goals, and are included in the work plans of Cluster 1, in which ESCWA is a participating agency.

- d. List primary implementing partners and stakeholders including key beneficiaries.

Primary Implementing Partners:

- Iraqi counterparts (Ministry of Higher Education, University of Baghdad, University of Basra, University of Mosul and Mansour University College)
- Lebanese American University (LAU)
- UNESCO

- Cisco
- ESCWA

Key Beneficiaries:

- Iraqi schools, colleges, universities, technical institutions, and departments of engineering and computer science
- Internet Centers
- The Iraqi ICT sector
- Iraqi students and teachers

In addition, the general public and the Iraqi economy will benefit from the project. The Ministry of Higher Education and Iraqi universities have participated in formulation of the project and are participating in implementation and running of the project.

## II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME/ PROJECT RESULTS

- a. Report on the key outputs achieved and explain any variance in achieved versus planned results. Who have been the primary beneficiaries and how they were engaged in the programme/ project implementation?

Key outputs achieved:

- Physical infrastructure of all 4 RNAs and 6 LNAs: this was fully achieved following the purchase and delivery of all ICT equipment. The variance concerning the number of LNAs is due to the limitation of the project in terms of time and funding, completing the objective of the project was left to a second project, INA Phase II (project number B1-17), which is a follow-up project to INA. It is noteworthy that in Phase II, it was decided that one RNA would be added (in Erbil), and that only 39 LNAs would be established in total (for INA and INA Phase II combined), so that the total number of established academies would still be 44.
- Initial training-of-trainers: this was fully completed when Iraqi instructors attended and passed a one-month training programme at the Lebanese American University in Lebanon. Thirteen Iraqi lecturers and engineers were selected from the RNAs in the selected universities to attend training sessions.
- Start of classes in academies: In January 2005, classes started being conducted in the RNAs in Iraq for instructors and in LNAs for students. However, during the academic year 2004/2005 the projected number of enrolled students was 1,000. However, by the end of the project, very few academies had started giving courses. Therefore, only a handful of classes were conducted during this project, and less than 50 students were enrolled, due to the time and funding limitations of the project, in addition to the deteriorating security conditions in Iraq (curfews, bomb attacks, etc...). Hence, the complete achievement of the objectives of the project was left to a second project, INA Phase II, which is a follow-up project to INA-Phase I.

Primary Beneficiaries and their engagement in the project implementation:

The direct beneficiaries for this project are students in Iraqi universities and technical institutions who will make use of the knowledge learned through the Cisco networking courses given at the local networking academies to increase their ICT skills. These students' engagement consisted mostly of their participation in the classes and interaction with the instructors and the Cisco students' network. The indirect and long term beneficiary is Iraq's ICT and Education sector: these students, once graduated with the different Cisco certificates over the coming years, will form a substantial asset to Iraq, allowing them to find jobs in the Iraqi ICT sector and support enterprise ICT infrastructures in the government and private sectors.

- b. Report on how achieved outputs have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and explain any variance in actual versus planned contributions to the outcomes. Highlight any institutional and/ or behavioural changes amongst beneficiaries at the outcome level

This project was a building bloc, and the full impact of its achievements can only be accurately identified following the end of INA Phase II, since, as mentioned above, the complete achievement of the objectives of the project was left to a second project, INA Phase II, due to the time and funding limitations of the project. Therefore, at the end of the INA project, the results could not yet be seen since the academies were just starting to be operational. The overall outcome will be to enroll and graduate over 1,500 students per year in networking technology courses, which will be achievable following the establishment of all RNAs and LNAs distributed throughout Iraq, after the completion of the second INA project (INA Phase II).

- c. Explain the overall contribution of the programme/ project/ to the ICI, NDS, MDGs and Iraq UN Assistance Strategy.

Education and higher education are priority sectors in the UN Assistance Strategy to Iraq, the National Development Strategy of Iraq, and the Millennium Development Goals, and are included in the work plans of Cluster 1, in which ESCWA is a participating agency.

This project directly addresses the issues of education, job opportunity and creation, promoting gender and building partnerships. This project also indirectly supports capacity building for developing applications that target health, environment, and better life quality. These are all part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The partners involved (ESCWA and UNESCO) also have these issues as part of their mandates.

Finally, in returning to full enrolment, Iraq would be meeting its Human Rights commitments and the targets set by the international community in the 'Education for All' Declaration.

- d. Explain the contribution of key partnerships including national, international, inter-UN agency, CSO or others towards achievement of programme/ project results.

- Iraqi counterparts (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, University of Baghdad, University of Basra, University of Mosul and Mansour University College) are responsible for site preparation, provision of common facilities and payment of salaries and allowances of the staff of the academies. They are also responsible for training the trainers in the Local Academies;
- Lebanese American University (LAU) provided the initial training of staff members from the four universities. It has also been providing advisory support to the project team, as well as to the staff from the four universities that were trained at the RNA in the LAU campus;
- Cisco is one of the world leaders in networking technology, and provides education in different aspects of networking, through the Cisco Networking Academy Program (CNAP), which is adopted in all project academies;
- ESCWA is providing the total project management and overseeing the procurement, selection, installation and proper running of the hardware/software and other supporting services;
- UNESCO is providing background information on the state of the education sector in Iraq.

The successful partnership of UN-ESCWA with the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR), Cisco and the Lebanese American University (LAU) is a success story in the process of rehabilitating the education systems of countries in conflicts. In fact, the ESCWA INA project earned the "Against All Odds" Award for the year 2005, which was announced at the Cisco Networking Academy Conference 2005 in Valencia, Spain on 8th

September 2005 and was presented to the Executive Secretary during the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) Tunis meeting in November 2005.

e. Highlight the contribution of the programme/ project on cross-cutting issues:

- Were the needs of particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups addressed?

The academies that have been established cover all provinces of Iraq (except for the Kurdish region, which will be covered by INA Part II). Many of these provinces were neglected during the last three decades. The CNAP stipulates a non-profit making approach to networking training. The Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) of Cisco gives preferential incentives to disabled and marginalized groups to participate in the CNAP. Furthermore ICT jobs are known to be professionally friendly to disabled persons and offer many aid tools and gadgets to aid such groups. Furthermore, the hosting institutions to these academies are universities that have clear policies of non-discrimination and comply with international rules and laws that the new government of Iraq is anxious to abide to. The project specifically encourages universal access to information, as it enables the dissemination of networking technology and information sharing through the Internet and other networks that may be in place in the Iraqi society in the near future. As a consequence, the project will enable the Iraqi people to access global and national information in a more transparent manner, thus creating a friendly and enabling environment for good governance and propagation of human right culture.

- How did men and women benefit from the programme/project? How were gender inequalities handled?

The Iraqi higher education offer equal opportunities to both men and women. IT courses, in particular, are traditionally known to have more female than male students in most universities in Iraq. In many IT centres in government institutions, as well as professionals in the private sector, women represent a good share of the staff. In addition, CNAP emphasises this issue through the monitoring process it follows to ensure gender equality at all levels of the programme. The project team insisted that, as much as the situation in Iraq permits, women should be present in all student and instructor classes. Furthermore, women have actively participated in the initial training-of-trainers session which took place in August 2004 in the Lebanese American University in Byblos: of the 13 instructors who participated in the training, 2 were women.

- Were environmental concerns addressed including environmental impact/risk assessment where relevant?

ICT is usually considered as an environmentally friendly industry. Many of its components are produced in a manner to avoid pollution and encourage recycling.

- Were there any specific issues in relation to the security situation?

- As the academies are going to be located within campus of existing universities and other learning institutions, the issue of security will become part of the security issue of the hosting institution and thus enjoy the same security considerations as the host. Each specific academy will also be encouraged to take additional security measures as found appropriate to ensure the safe running of its activities. The project coordinator will provide advice to each academy in due course.
- However, the security situation in Iraq in general hindered the delivery of equipment, in addition to the refusal of suppliers of equipment to send trainers to Iraq.

- Did the project contribute to employment generation (gender disaggregated)?

The project provides a comprehensive learning infrastructure that will enhance employment opportunities for young people to work in hi-tech environment and throughout all sectors of the

economy (after completion of INA Phase II Project). The estimated number of graduates from these academies is about 1,500 per year. The job market in Iraq is in need of specialized IT-skilled graduates covering advanced technologies. In certain cases, some of these graduates may turn up to be entrepreneurs, starting their small businesses and employing others. Furthermore, by building the capacity of Iraqi youth, the project increases the personal asset of every young Iraqi enrolled in the academies and opens up opportunities to find decent jobs in the Iraqi ICT sector. The implementation of this project provided the building blocks for future expansion of the networking academies infrastructure. The outcome of this project in terms of employability will become evident at a later stage when the students graduating from the academies enter the job market.

- f. Provide an assessment of the programme/ project based on performance indicators as per approved project document using the template in Section IV

### III. EVALUATION & LESSONS LEARNED

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

No evaluation was conducted at the end of the INA project. However, in June-July 2008, International Solutions Group conducted an overall evaluation following the completion of the activities of the follow-up project, INA Phase II (as per attached evaluation report). The evaluation includes both projects.

Key findings:

ISG conducted site visits to all of the RNAs in Iraq, attended the INA end-of-project conference, and met with a variety of key project stakeholders. The result of these meetings was the identification of several issues that impeded the full accomplishment of the project goals in terms of progress in the establishment of LNAs and numbers of students graduated.

- The nature of the INA work has been predominantly focused on the public sector for a variety of reasons. Had the project relied on private sector institutions, it would not have reached the degree of success it has reached today. However, now that the basic foundation has been laid, the project must adapt a more innovative approach to expanding further.
- Most of the negative issues that have affected the project and slowed the growth of the program are related to the fact that the INA centers are a new concept for the Iraqi public sector officials, who are unsure where the centers fit in their administrative and budgetary structures.
- All of the four public-sector RNAs cited difficulties in the administration of the centers due to lack of a clearly defined Iraqi Government policy regarding such administration. There is some confusion as to how the centers should be treated as legal entities and which accounting policies should be applied. Thus, there are frequent and recurring problems having to do with the non-provision of certain needed resources in a timely manner.
- Despite these challenges, the INA project overall was substantially successful in the creation of awareness of the importance of the project for the education of the upcoming generations. Most of the participating universities have integrated the Cisco curriculum into their requirements for computer science degrees. Baghdad University has gone even further and made it a requirement for all students in all of its colleges to take the IT course.

- b. Indicate key constraints including delays (if any) during programme/ project implementation

- Security: The main constraints were related to the deteriorating security condition in Iraq: curfews, bomb attacks, etc. This affected the implementation of the project by delaying normal operation and shipments. Also, the security situation led to the refusal of suppliers of equipment to send trainers to Iraq. Consequently, inspection of equipment and training of Iraqis for equipment inspection, installation and use was undertaken in Beirut. This increased cost and delay in implementation. The issue of security in Iraq also hindered the delivery of equipment;
  - Electricity: Electricity in Iraq is supplied a couple of hours per day, which resulted in delays, such as the repeated interruptions of training sessions which adversely affect the education process;
  - Communications: Difficulties in communications (phone and email) between INA project team in Beirut, INA project coordinator in Baghdad, and the main contacts at the academies;
  - Shipping to and delivery in Iraq: Multiple companies carry out the shipping, with no retained knowledge or continuous relationship; difficulty in obtaining customs exemption letters; and inexperienced shippers;
  - Customs clearance: Logistics in the Government of Iraq to get customs exemption letters proved to be tedious and spanned over several months;
  - Lack of adequate administrative support from universities and colleges where the RNAs and LNAs have been established: All of the RNAs and LNAs tied to public universities complained about lack of adequate financial and administrative support from their university administration. Also, the lack of clarity of the legal status of the centers generally puts the centers at the whim of the university administration.
- c. Report key lessons learned that would facilitate future programme design and implementation.

The following is a list of lessons learned and/or recommendations derived from the challenges encountered in the project.

- Obtaining the customs clearance documents proved to be a lengthy process to be completed. This period needs to be taken into consideration whenever purchases and deliveries are to be made to any Iraqi site. Customs clearance process should be started in parallel with the purchase in order not to encounter delays and demurrage fees while waiting for the appropriate documents. The Iraqi government should be alerted about the lengthy process of customs clearance and UNAMI should approach GoI to give umbrella clearance for all UN DG ITF projects.
- In future projects, a deeper involvement by the Iraqi governmental counterpart should be stressed by the project partners to ensure effective impact on the direct and indirect beneficiaries.
- Include more Private Sector LNAs in the Cisco Academies Network in Iraq: there are many students that are to be found working or aspiring to work in the private sector that the INA has not reached. There are also a large number of computer training centres that could be potential partners with Cisco and viable players in the CNAP in Iraq as LNAs, for example.
- Conduct nation-wide awareness campaigns reaching out to all potential partners: Awareness of the importance of the education that the CNAP centers provide must be expanded. Many of the challenges that the program faces has to do with a lack of understanding among influential members of Iraqi society on all levels as to the importance of education in computer science and practical applications that the CNAP program provides.

#### IV. INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance (if any)	Source of Verification	Comments (if any)
<p><b>IP Outcome 1</b>            To provide the Iraqi people the opportunity to receive Networking education and thus empower them to actively contribute to the rebuilding and development process of their country. This project will directly contribute to the restoration of the ICT education system in Iraq, and is aimed to address areas of urgent need.</p>							
<p><b>IP Output 1.1</b>            Establish RNAs in major Universities in Iraq</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1.1            Number of RNAs established</p>	<p>Insufficient infrastructure and facilities (such as laboratories and libraries), and equipment</p>	<p>4 RNAs (in 4 major Universities in Iraq)</p>	<p>4 RNAs (in 4 major Universities in Iraq)</p>	<p>No variance.</p>	<p>RNAs contracts signed with CISCO</p>	
<p><b>IP Output 1.2</b>            Support the RNAs to establish LNAs in Iraq</p>	<p>Indicator 1.2.1            Number of LNAs established</p>	<p>Insufficient infrastructure and facilities (such as laboratories and libraries), and equipment</p>	<p>40 LNAs in Iraq (10 LNAs for each RNA)</p>	<p>6 LNAs (2 affiliated with each of the following: Baghdad Uni., Mosul Uni., Al Mansour Uni. College)</p>	<p>Due to limitations in time and funds, only 6 LNAs were established. A follow-up project to complete the activities not yet implemented was approved to start where the present project ended.</p>	<p>LNAs contracts signed with RNAs</p>	
<p><b>IP Output 1.3</b>            Enroll and graduate students from each LNA during the first</p>	<p>Indicator 1.3.1            Number of students enrolled</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Enroll and graduate 50 students per LNA during the first</p>	<p>Less than 50</p>	<p>By the end of the project, very few academies had started giving courses. This</p>	<p>Online management system and class report cards</p>	<p>After INA Phase II, the programme is expected to train a total of 1,732 students and</p>

academic year of the project.			academic year – projected total of 1,000 enrolled students		indicator can only be accurately measured after the completion of INA Phase II.		graduate 1,260 students.
<b>IP Output 1.4</b> Provide a link between the programme graduates and the Iraqi job market through the Cisco Alumni Connections and Alumni programme	Indicator 1.4.1 Number of students registered on Alumni Connections	Weak relationship between higher education and the labor market	1,500 per year	N/A	This indicator could not be measured due to the short period that remained between the establishment of the 6 LNAs and the operational closure of the project.	Number of graduates placed in jobs.	This number cannot be identified prior to project the end of INA Phase II.