



IRAQ TRUST FUND

ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2011

Programme Title & Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme Title: Assisting the Government of Iraq to Develop a National Tourism Strategy• Programme Number: Project C 9-30• MDTF Office Atlas Number:

Country, Locality(s), Thematic Area(s) ²
Country: Iraq Governorate: Baghdad, Erbil and Najaf; nationwide for mapping Town: Sector: Governance

Participating Organization(s)
UNESCO

Implementing Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Culture

Programme/Project Cost (US\$)	
UNDG ITF:	USD 1,000,000
Agency Core: UNESCO	USD 250,000
Govt. Contribution:	
Other Contribution (donor)	
TOTAL:	USD 1,250,000

Programme Duration (months)
Overall Duration: 12 months
Start Date ³ : 01 March 2010, officially, but funds were credited on UNESCO account end of May 2010
End Date or Revised End Date, 28 April 2011

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Priority Area for the Peacebuilding Fund; Sector for the UNDG ITF.

³ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MDTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MDTF Office GATEWAY](http://mdtf.undp.org) (<http://mdtf.undp.org>).

Programme Assessments/Mid-Term Evaluation

Assessment Completed - if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: _____

Mid-Evaluation Report – if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: _____

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Introduction:

Pillar 1 of the National Development Strategy of Iraq (2007 – 2010) seeks to strengthen the foundations of economic growth through a variety of means including providing a greater role for tourism. Considering the economic might of the tourist industry, careful attention should be paid to this many-sided phenomenon with its global repercussions. It is UNESCO's intention to assist Iraqi Government in preparing a National Tourism Strategy. The main objective of the project is to strengthen capacities of relevant Government Institutions, in particular of the State Board of Tourism for the strategic planning of tourism sector and for promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism.

Development of a comprehensive tourism strategy for Iraq will cover different aspect of the tourist industry. Moreover, it will identify potential touristic products for cultural, religious and eco-tourism and will suggest ways of developing the sector at a short-, mid- and long-terms. The mapping of Iraq's rich cultural resources is at its very early stage targeting mainly the mapping of cultural heritage sites and museums collections. This extremely important exercise coordinated by the Ministry of Culture needs to be supported by extending the scope of mapped resources to religious and natural sites.

NARRATIVE REPORT**I. Purpose****Main objectives, outcomes, outputs of the programme.**

The Project is designed to assist the Government of Iraq to develop a National Tourism Strategy in cooperation with stakeholders responsible for cultural, religious and eco-tourism assets. The Project is articulated around two outputs 1) Capacity Development for Tourism Sector and 2) Support to the creation of tools for the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism in Iraq.

The project will contribute to UNCT Sector Team Outcome "Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance" through two outputs;

Output 1.1: Capacity Development for Tourism Sector, with the following anticipated results:

- Development of an institutional capacity building programme for concerned stakeholders
- Training the State Board of Tourism and other stakeholders on Strategic Planning to ensure the inclusive process of National Tourism Strategy Development and to enhance the tourism sector;
- Study tours in the region targeting three case studies: cultural tourism for world heritage site, religious tourism and eco-tourism;
- Strengthening of the coordination mechanism among tourism sector stakeholders;
- The final draft of Tourism Strategy developed and indorsed.

Output 1.2: Support to the creation of tools for the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism in Iraq.

1. Development of Virtual Tours: The Project will train a team of young architects, archaeologists and web-designers for production of web-based virtual tours. Sample Virtual Tours will be developed for two cultural sites, two religious sites and two eco-tourism sites. The choice of the sites belongs to the State Board of Tourism with approval of the Steering Committee:

2. Support to the development of Tourism Guide Licensing System

The project assists the Government of Iraq in establishment of criteria for the Tourism Guide Licensing System Identification of training centers for future upgrading and licensing of guides for cultural, religious and eco-tourism sites and technical support for the curricula of those centers

Beneficiaries:

Direct Beneficiaries include the Government of Iraq and all relevant governmental institutions. Similarly youth and tour guides will benefit from the Virtual Tours development and licensing support. The project aims for at least 45% participation by women in all workshops and training sessions.

Programme relation to the Strategic (UN) Planning Framework guiding the operations of the Fund/JP.

UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq

The project will directly address the joint UN Assistance Framework guiding the operations of the UNDG ITF and contribute to UNCT Sector Outcome “Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance” through Strengthening regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance.

UN Millennium Development Goals MDGs

This project contributes to MDG Goal 8, to develop a global partnership for development, Target 8a: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS) & The International Compact with Iraq (ICI)

Assisting the Government of Iraq to develop a National Tourism Strategy will strengthening the platform for economic growth and support national priorities detailed in the NDS; 5.3: Strengthen economic growth through tourism; 7.1: Human Development; 9.4: Strengthening institutions and improving governance; and ICC Benchmarks; 4.2.1.2 Adopt and implement comprehensive transparency policies and legislation.

II. Resources

The two funding resources available to the project are the above said, namely UNDGITF US\$ 1,000,000 and UNESCO core fund US\$ 250,000.

Provide details on any budget revisions approved by the appropriate decision-making body, if applicable.

N/A

Constraints

No specific financial constraints over the reporting period

Human Resources:

National Staff: Three National Programme Officers (NPOs) based in Baghdad, Najaf and Erbil to coordinate with the partner representatives in the area. The NPOs are responsible for the daily follow up on the project implementation and in order to fully ensure the inclusive process for development of the National Tourism Strategy. One Project Assistant is based in Amman to ensure smooth administrative support to the implementation of the project.

International Staff: The Project implementation consists of an international Culture Programme Specialist, based in Amman, responsible for the overall guidance of the project.

Five International Consultants will provide the necessary training for building tourism capacity, development and management of heritage tourism, and development of hospitality sector.

III. Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

Summary of the implementation mechanisms primarily utilized

The UNESCO Office for Iraq, in Amman, is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the project. The Project Management Team consists of a Culture Programme Specialist and a Project Assistant (based in Amman to ensure smooth administrative support to the implementation of the project), and three National Programme Officers (NPOs) based in Baghdad, Najaf and Erbil respectively to coordinate with the partner representatives in the area. The NPOs have regular meetings with concerned stakeholders and members of the Drafting Team. In addition to the daily follow up on the project implementation and in order to fully ensure the inclusive process for development of the National Tourism Strategy, the NPOs are charged to liaise with the consultants hired under the project.

A drafting team comprised of focal points from all concerned institutions and chaired by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities will draft the National Tourism Strategy under guidance and monitoring of the international experts. The international experts will prepare follow-up guidelines and tools to be used by the National Drafting Team while they are preparing draft chapters of the strategy; and review drafts and provide feedback and guidance for revision.

Details on the procurement procedures utilized.

A team of international experts in capacity-building and strategic planning for tourism has been selected through a competitive bidding process.

Monitoring system(s) that are being used and how you identify and incorporate lessons learned into the ongoing project.

The project is designed to meet the requirements for monitoring, evaluation and reporting in line with the Memorandum of Understanding of the UN Development Group Iraq Trust Fund as well as by the standard policies and procedures of UNESCO. The results framework are used as the basis for monitoring and reporting progress against outputs, stipulated indicators and their contribution towards the outcome.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementing partners of the Project is specified in the term of references of the contractual agreements. The UNESCO Culture Programme Specialist in close cooperation with the focal points of the project implementation representing national counterpart ensure that all outputs stipulated in the terms of reference are delivered in accordance with the contractual agreements without any delay.

At the end of the project, an external evaluation will be undertaken to (i) assess and showcase the achieved progress and results against stipulated project results on all stakeholders especially beneficiary groups, (ii) assess the efficiency of the project interventions (iii) understand the effectiveness of project interventions in addressing the underlying problem (iv) assess the relevance of project components in addressing the needs and issues of beneficiary groups (v) assess management arrangements (including procurement procedures, coordination, monitoring) in place by the GoI and/ or the beneficiary communities towards the sustainability of various project-initiated services and benefits (vi) generate lessons on good practices based on assessment from the aforementioned evaluation objectives and to provide recommendations to all stakeholders (GoI, UN, donors, civil society) on how to maximize the results from similar initiatives in comparable situations.

Assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken

Assessment of the capacity/operational needs of the State Board of Tourism was completed in May 2011 and analyzed, and data that will feed into the policy development component of the project.

IV. Results

Programme progress in relation to planned outcomes and outputs

In Feb 2011, an Italian cultural tourism expert dispatched by Italian Embassy for the project spent one month in Baghdad closely working with the State Tourism Board on data gathering and also training staff for introducing the international framework of tourism development as an industry that should respect sustainable management of cultural resources such as tourism, site, religious sites and ecological sites. He performed an assessment of the capacity/operational needs of the State Board of Tourism that will be feed into the policy development component of the project.

During a long period of institutional uncertainty (see below) and project operational implementation complications with the main partners, UNESCO organized a second training session in Amman in June 2011 for 20 government staff with participation of international tourism consultants. This meeting launched the process of reflection about the concept of a tourism strategy and about the issues related to its application in Iraq. It was combined with a one day study-tour on 6th June to introduce the Jordanian experience to Iraqi participants in the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism sites.

Between April and December 2011, UNESCO also supported the identification of tourism training curricula in Iraq (including for tour-guides), and a nation-wide mapping of tourism assets undertaken by the University of Mustansiriya which is almost completed.

After full review of the project outcomes with GoI partners completed in Nov-Dec 2011, the process was launched to identify a team of international experts in capacity-building and strategic planning for tourism.

Key outputs achieved in the reporting period including # and nature of the activities (inputs), % of completion and beneficiaries.

Under output 1.1 (GOI has improved capacities to develop the tourism sector); the assessment of the capacity and operational needs of the Iraqi tourism board is completed and analyzed; and 50 (30 male, 20 female) government staff introduced to the tourism strategy development, achieving 100% of the total target number.

Explain, if relevant, delays in programme implementation, the nature of the constraints, actions taken to mitigate future delays and lessons learned in the process.

This project faced major obstacles and constraints caused by a long period of institutional uncertainty and operational implementation complications with the main partners that delayed the project.

Initially, there was a delay of 2 months in releasing the fund causing the delay in starting the project. More importantly, there was also a major delay of one year in implementing the activities planned for 2011 because of the unstable status of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The two main Boards involved in the implementation of the project, the State Board of Tourism and the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, have been under the double responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and the State Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Because of this institutional arrangement, and tensions between ministries, there was not clear structure for decision-making about who should be UNESCO's interlocutor for the project, and who should take the lead in planning for project implementation.

To mitigate future delays, UNESCO undertook a review together with GoI to assess progress against outputs, stipulated indicators and their contribution towards the outcome as stated in the results framework and work plan, and as measured by the corresponding indicators. Focusing on output-to-outcome level results and identifying major problems and challenges faced the operational management of the project and in order to overcome these delays and to ensure that expected results are achieved within the budget and proposed timeframe, UNESCO office together with State Board of Tourism and in close coordination with other counterparts revised the implementation plan and scope of the work. This review was completed in Dec 2011. It was agreed to focus on the following activities to be implemented once the new Law on the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities was in force:

1. Trainings on strategic planning for twenty staff from relevant government institutions (State Board of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, etc.) to enhance their capacities to prepare a National Tourism Strategy
2. Development of the outline of a National Tourism Strategy including institutional development, human resource development (including training needs), and private sector development (with focus on hospitality industry)
3. Preparation of a Tourism Development Plan for the site of Babylon (cultural tourism)
4. Preparation of a Tourism Management Plan for the city of Najaf (religious tourism)
5. National conference to present and endorse the outline of the National Tourism Strategy
6. Training and developments of 6 virtual tours

To this effect, the process was launched to recruit a team of international experts in capacity-building and strategic planning for tourism so to ensure rapid mobilization of human resources as soon as the Tourism Law would be passed by the Council of Representatives.

Key partnerships and collaborations

The government counterparts are the Ministry of Culture, the State Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Endowment (Waqf) and Religious Affairs, State Board of Tourism, State Board of Antiquities and Heritage.

UNESCO also cooperates with international institutions and NGO for heritage protection as follows: IGO- ICCROM, World Tourism Organization; International Council for Site and Monuments (ICOMOS) International Council for Museums (ICOM), World Monument Fund (WMF); Visiting Arts; Foundations: Getty Conservation Institute, and the national NGO Iraq Association to Support Culture, Culture for All.

Other highlights and cross-cutting issues:

Human rights: Acceptance and recognition of the diversity of culture is conducive to dialogue, respect and mutual understanding. Therefore the freedom of cultural expression is a basic human right. Moreover the implementation of cultural rights is a pre-requisite to peace and security. The Project is working with duty bearers and rights holders to ensure a broad-based understanding that cultural diversity is a driving force for sustainable development, and of the important role that diversity plays in supporting intercultural and inter religious dialogue.

Gender equality: The Project will ensure the gender balance for any activity and training within the capacity development component as well as integration of gender equality principles in the National Tourism Strategy.

Key environmental issues: A country's biodiversity, its protection and promotion is an integral part of tourism development of the country, and therefore the Project, developing eco-tourism destinations' will be addressing environmental issues, will respect and employ environmental policies established for Iraq in order to ensure the sustainable character of the development of ecotourism in Iraq.

Employment generation: The Project does not directly focus on employment. Indirectly the Project will contribute to the development of the better opportunities for tour guides. In addition, it will also contribute to the long term development of the labor market connected to the tourism sector.

V. Future Work Plan

- Summarize the projected activities and expenditures for the following reporting period (1 January-31 December 2012), using the lessons learned during the previous reporting period.

Only in January 2012 did the Council of Representatives passed the Ministry of Tourism law that gives this ministry sole authority over the two boards. The Ministry was then able to nominate the 20 members of the drafting team and set a schedule with UNESCO for the implementation of the last phase of the project which now requires extension until Dec 2012 to be brought to completion.

The following activities will be implemented over the next reporting period, and pending acceptance of the request for extension of the project:

1. Trainings on strategic planning for twenty staff from relevant government institutions (State Board of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, etc.) to enhance their capacities to prepare a National Tourism Strategy
2. Development of the outline of a National Tourism Strategy including institutional development, human resource development (including training needs), and private sector development (with focus on hospitality industry)
3. Preparation of a Tourism Development Plan for the site of Babylon (cultural tourism)
4. Preparation of a Tourism Management Plan for the city of Najaf (religious tourism)
5. National conference to present and endorse the outline of the National Tourism Strategy
6. Training and developments of 6 virtual tours

Major Activities	2012												Implementing Partners	Budget
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
	1.Capacity-building for development of National Tourism Strategy													
2. Tourism Development Plan for Babylon														60,000
3. Tourism Management Plan for Najaf														60,000
4. Training on and building of virtual tours														40,000
5. Organization of National Conference on Tourism														50,000
6. Evaluation and final Report														
Total														460,000

Major adjustments in strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs planned.

A request for project extension with some modification of activities and budget revision will be submitted to allow the completion of project implementation by end of December 2012. However, outcomes and outputs will remain the same.

VIII. INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

	Performance Indicators	Indicators or Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance (if any)	Source of Verification	Comments (if any)
Outcome 1 Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance							
Output 1.1: GOI has improved capacities to develop the tourism sector	1.1.1 Assessment of the capacity and operational needs of the Iraqi tourism board completed	N/A	1 assessment report	100%		Assessment report by expert	
	1.1.2 No. of government staff trained on strategic planning (gender disaggregated)	0	20, 10 male 10 female	30%		Report of June 2011 training workshop	
	1.1.3 % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and usefulness	N/A	100%	80%		Pre-post training assessment	
	1.1.4 Number of staff participating in study tours on planning and management cultural, religious, and ecotourism	0	20 10 male 10 female	100%		Study tour report	
	1.1.5 A tourism strategy is drafted	0	1	0%		Strategy document	
	1.1.6 Number of Ministry of	0	20	0%		Training report	

	Environment and Ministry of Religious Affairs staff training in data collection of religious and eco - tourism sites						
	1.1.7 % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and usefulness	N/A	100%			Pre-post participants assessment	
Output 1.2: GOI is better able to promote cultural, religious and eco -tourism	1.2.1 No. of government staff trained on Preparation of Tourism Management Plan	0	10 5 male 5 female	0%	Text	Training report	
	1.2.2 % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and usefulness	N/A	100%			Pre-post participants' assessment	
	1.2.3 No. of government staff trained on Preparation of Tourism Development Plan	0	10 5 male 5 female	0%		Programme records	
	1.2.4 % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and	N/A	100%			Pre-post participants' assessment	

	usefulness						
	2.1.5 Number of training centers identified for tourism guides in cultural, religious and ecotourism identified	NA	3 (see below)	100%		Progress report	

1/ Tourism Studies Department, University of Mustansiriya

2/ Tourism Studies Department, University of Hilla

3/ Guide Training Center, Municipality of Najaf, Tourism Department