

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

Participating UN Organization(s)	Sector(s)/Area(s)/Theme(s)
UNAMI and UNOPS	Governance

Programme/Project Title	Programme/Project Number
Conducting Lessons Learned and Project Evaluations for the IRFFI	C9-32 MPTF Atlas Project Number: 75455

Programme/Project Budget	Programme/Project Location
UNDG ITF: USD 990,038 Govt. Contribution: USD 0 Agency Core: USD 0 Other: USD 0 TOTAL: USD 990,038	Region (s): Pan - Iraq Governorate(s): All District(s) All

Final Programme/ Project Evaluation	Programme/Project Timeline/Duration
Evaluation Done <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Evaluation Report Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Overall Duration <i>12 months, 14th June 2010 - 14th June 2011</i> Original Duration <i>6 months 14th June 2010 - 14th December 2010</i> Programme/ Project Extensions <i>Extension approved for 6 months from 15th December 2010 until 14th June 2011.</i>

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. The Seventh IRFFI Donor Committee (DC) meeting requested to commission a comprehensive lessons learned and evaluation exercise to distil accomplishments, lessons and experiences gained during the implementation of the UNDG ITF to assist Iraq to strengthen future programming and aid effectiveness while informing the UN System and the donors of the mechanism, what worked and what did not work and why. The Eighth IRFFI DC meeting in November 2009 emphasized the need to look at both development and operational effectiveness of the UNDG ITF following a participatory process involving all stakeholders including non-IRFFI donors and the Government of Iraq.

The UNDG ITF Lessons Learned Exercise (LLE) was intended to provide lessons learned during the course of implementation of programmes and projects and their respective contributions in terms of achievements, constraints and failures, while critically reviewing the UNDG ITF processes and procedures and their role in maximizing the operational effectiveness of the UNDG ITF. To the extent possible, the LLE was to be designed to gain from the independent evaluations of 60 UNDG ITF programmes/projects to objectively assess the programmatic contributions to development priorities and challenges in Iraq.

The LLE should aid the GoI and donors to identify the added value of the UNDG ITF as part of broader international recovery, reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq, as well as strengths and weaknesses of the GoI's and donors' roles in the management, coordination and oversight of the UNDG ITF. It was intended that this exercise will provide a basis for designing an effective Iraq-led aid coordination mechanism that builds on the effective UNDG ITF processes and mechanisms.

- b. Government of Iraq (GOI) and UNCT supported to generate lessons on development and operational effectiveness of the UNDG-Iraq Trust Fund. The project was managed by UNOPS, in close coordination with the UNDG ITF Steering Committee and its Support Office, and Ministry of Planning (MoP)..
- c. JP 1: Strengthened institutions, processes and regulatory frameworks of national and local governance
NDS: Indirectly contributes to Goal 6 (Improving the quality of life) and Section 10.2 (Monitoring and Evaluation)
ICI Benchmarks (as per the Joint Monitoring Matrix 2008): Indirectly contributes to Section 4.4 (Human Development and Human Security)
- d. UNOPS contracted PriceWaterhouseCoopers through a competitive procurement process to undertake the Lessons Learned Exercise. Stakeholders and beneficiaries include all GOI Ministries and line ministries, the MDTF, members of the IRFFI, UNAMI and the entire UNCT.

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 Activities of the project were:

1. The drafting, advertisement, selection, recommendation and award for Services for a Lessons

Learned Exercise, the purpose of which was:

- A. To assess the development effectiveness of the programmes and projects administered under the UNDG ITF and to showcase the contributions and results of UNDG ITF towards recovery, reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq.
 - B. To assess the effectiveness of the UNDG ITF processes in supporting compliance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness principles and the United Nations (UN) reform process in Iraq.
 - C. To understand the relevance of design, legal arrangements and governance mechanisms for the UNDG ITF as well as the UN internal coordination arrangements within a two-window fund in terms of recovery, reconstruction and development priorities and challenges, highlighting their contribution to the achievement of development results in Iraq.
 - D. To provide an evidence base for the UN system and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Office for the development and refinement of new and existing MDTFs, respectively.
 - E. To guide the Government of Iraq (GoI), donors and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in establishing effective coordination and operational mechanisms in support of aid and development
2. The selected provider carried out field work, data collection, data analysis and prepared, finalized and then presented a final report document to be found at this link:
- <http://mdtf.undp.org/document/download/8088>

The methodology used was:

The LLE built on findings from 60 independent evaluations of UNDG ITF programmes and projects that were commissioned by the UN agencies participating in the UNDG ITF, as well as on lessons learned from earlier reviews of the UNDG ITF conducted by PwC in 2005 and Scanteam in 2008. The LLE took a methodical approach to generating lessons learned over the life of UNDG ITF. The key guiding principles included:

1. *Fact- and evidence-based review*: Numbers and figures were sought throughout the LLE to support stakeholder perspectives received during the exercise as well as to supplement the information received from secondary information sources.
2. *A two-perspective approach to analysis*: As the UNDG ITF approached its planned closure, the LLE considered the overall contribution of the Trust Fund to the development of Iraq, and how the fund structure supported the programmatic operations of the UN Country Team (UNCT) at a macro level. In addition, the LLE performed a detailed analysis of the evaluation reports of 60 projects and programmes to generate lessons around the operational and development effectiveness of UNDG ITF at a micro level. These two lenses contributed significantly to identifying lessons learned and producing evidence-based recommendations.
3. *Multi-stakeholder review*: More than 120 interviews were conducted during the various stages of the LLE, with key implementing partners represented by donors at headquarters and field level, staff at national and local levels of the GoI, all participating UN agencies, and the major Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). While most interviews were conducted in person in Amman, Baghdad, Erbil and New York, a few interviews were held over the phone. In addition, several meetings organized with the Chairperson of the UNDG ITF Steering Committee (SC), the Steering Committee Support Office (SCSO) and the UN MDTF Office provided numerous details and perspectives on the UNDG ITF that were used throughout the LLE.
4. *Use of pre-defined parameters for the operations and development reviews*: As indicated in the UNDG ITF LLE ToR, the operational-effectiveness review was guided by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness principles endorsed by the donor community as general guidelines for aid

effectiveness in 2005 and adopted by the GoI in 2008. The agreed-on parameters for operational effectiveness included Trust Fund design and structure, alignment, harmonization, national ownership, development of national capacity, management for development results, and accountability.

The development effectiveness review was guided by the parameters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC)’s criteria for assessing development aid. The parameters ensured the use of clear, globally defined concepts and criteria that facilitated the review and analysis. The development effectiveness review was based on development results, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability.

All were completed without noteworthy variance.

- 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

The final LLE Report contributed to the better design of future nationally implemented and internationally funded humanitarian and development projects through the output of the GOI and UNCT being supported in generating lessons on development and operational effectiveness of the UNDG-Iraq Trust Fund. This was the first lessons learned exercise of its kind that the GoI and MoP undertook with the UN (or other international body), indirectly there was exposure to the methodology and process of undertaking a lessons learned exercise, which helps achieve the outcome of “Strengthened institutions, processes and regulatory frameworks of national and local governance”.

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

Given the unique nature of this project vis-à-vis the UNDG ITF guidelines, if effectively used, the results of the lessons learned exercise should contribute directly both to the GoI’s actions towards implementing the Paris Principles, as well as towards identifying areas for improvement of future programming by the UN and the GoI in support of the National Development Plan and achievement of the MDGs as well as the implementation of the UN Development Assistance Framework. Indirectly, the manner in which this exercise was conducted should provide an example to the GoI and other stakeholders that might serve to guide future lessons learned exercises. It may also guide the final design of the aid coordination mechanisms under discussion with the donors and GoI as the successor to the IRFFI Donor and Executive Committees.

The LLE was shared extensively with the Government, the intention being that the GoI and the UNCT take into account key findings when formulating future phases of development strategies.

- ICI

The Project contributed to the realisations of the objectives set in the International Compact with Iraq (ICI). The Compact aims to consolidate peace and pursue political, economic and social development. Within this framework, the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the MoP is a significant contribution to promote good governance.

- Iraq NDS

The project contributed to the goal of achieving Pillar 4 of the Iraq National Development Strategy (NDS), strengthening good governance and improve security. The NDS specifically mentions that to achieve the goals of Pillar 4 it is required, among other things, to support the

MoP. Under this project, the MoP is supported through the services provided by the consulting firm (PriceWaterhouseCoopers-PWC). PWC was competitively selected to provide consulting Services to perform the Lessons Learned Exercise to the Iraq trust Fund.

- UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq

By providing lessons on the IRFFI and how to best coordinate international assistance to Iraq this project will contribute toward outcome four of the UN Assistance for Iraq 2008-2010 which is “Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance.” This project specifically supported output 4.2 under outcome 4, which is “Enhanced Iraqi capacities to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor public sector reforms and international assistance.”

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

Given that key to this project’s implementation was the interviewing and analysis of UNDG ITF projects all stakeholders (from beneficiaries, GoI, many CSOs, international partners and UN organisations) were necessarily involved in the achievement of the project results. In addition PWC was used as the consulting organisation (competitively selected) performing the Lesson Learned Exercise.

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

- Were the needs of particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups addressed?
- How did men and women benefit from the programme/project? How were gender inequalities handled?
- Were environmental concerns addressed including environmental impact/risk assessment where relevant?
- Were there any specific issues in relation to the security situation?
- Did the project contribute to employment generation (gender disaggregated)?

By performing an LLE of the ITF arguably the population of Iraq and all beneficiaries of future Multi-donor trust funds will have improved mechanisms for coordination of development and humanitarian needs.

Given the nature of the project, the assessment of the projects entailed the examination of impact on these cross cutting issues, and lessons learned exercise referenced how the UN succeeded or failed in addressing them through the UNDG ITF-funded interventions.

Human rights: The LLE referenced the degrees to which the HRBA approach was applied and reflected in the projects, and provided recommendations which could improve the application of its principles.

Gender equality: The LLE referenced the degrees to which gender issues were addressed/ reflected in the projects, and provided recommendations which could improve the application of gender sensitivity and focus in future programming.

Key environmental issues: The LLE referenced the degree to which environmental impact of interventions was taken into account and reflected in the projects, and provided recommendations which could improve responsiveness to environmental implications of projects.

Employment generation, The LLE referenced the degree to which employment generation was addressed through and resulted from the projects. The LLE project itself did not generate any employment.

- 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?

A performance evaluation of the main contractor was undertaken as standard procurement practice. As there were no other elements to this project other than the procuring of a consultancy to undertake the Lessons Learned Exercise and this project in itself was in essence an evaluation of all of other projects, no other evaluation took place.

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

Although there were no key constraints, some delays took place because of:

- i) the challenge of scheduling so many Iraqi Government, or other national counterpart meetings within the security conditions of Baghdad;
- ii) the Arab League Summit, scheduled in early 2011, ultimately postponed, caused logistical deployment delays temporarily.

- c. Report key lessons learned that would facilitate future programme design and implementation.

- i) Having an independent and objective review was appreciated by all partners. It also supports enhancing transparency and accountability of the multi-donor trust fund mechanism.
- ii) In a challenging environment like Iraq where security situation remains fragile, it is necessary to plan much in advance to ensure that programme activities are not compromised and the effective participation of all stakeholders is ensured.
- iii) The placement of the Lessons learned Management Team that included representatives of PwC, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, UNOPS and the Iraq Trust Fund Steering Committee and the Resident Coordinator's Office ensured facilitation of the Lessons Learned Exercise process and enabled addressing any operational challenges in a timely manner. In addition, it also allowed for collective quality assurance throughout the process.
- iv) It should be noted that some of the 60 independent project evaluations which formed the basis of the overall LLE assessment were not conducted in conjunction with the closure of the projects. Though certain impact assessments might actually be easier to make after the passing of time, the institutional memory amongst the partners participating in a project is naturally reduced over time and would have been better accessed had the evaluations been commissioned in conjunction with the closure of the projects.
- v) For similar reasons, parties which could have shed light on aspects of project implementation early on in the lifetime of the Trust Fund, were no longer available for interviews with the PwC at the time of the final Lessons Learned exercise. Had the Lessons Learned Exercised been commissioned at an earlier stage, perhaps interviews could have been conducted in phases throughout the lifetime of the Fund.

Furthermore, key lessons learned from the actual report were:

Lessons learned—things that were done well

The UNDG ITF was implemented in a post-conflict environment with high levels of violence, weak government capacity and the inability of UNCT to operate effectively within the country. Given this very challenging context, the UNDG ITF performed well and was able to disburse donor funds to address a wide range of issues that were in line with Iraq's needs and priorities. Despite the security challenges, the UNDG ITF has been operating continuously for seven years thus far and has remained flexible in adapting to the changing contextual environment and the expectations of donors and the GoI. This is evident in the transition in the scope of the UNDG ITF-supported programmatic interventions and the evolution in the UNDG ITF governance structures over the years.

The UNDG ITF was an indispensable mechanism in the Iraq development efforts for much of the period from 2004 to 2010. It enabled the UNCT to provide much-needed support to the Iraqi people in key areas and sectors of importance. In particular, projects funded by the UNDG ITF made a significant contribution to establishing a modern electoral process and support for a democratic system in Iraq, which is a unique outcome within the region. The projects also provided needed services and goods in the key sectors of health and education, which resulted in Iraq being able to provide these two basic social services across the country. In addition, the projects addressed historical disparities between the 18 Governorates of Iraq, and UN agencies made efforts to address the neediest and most vulnerable population groups. The projects contributed substantially towards recovery and rehabilitation across sectors from agriculture to housing, electricity, water and sanitation, and cultural heritage.

The efforts funded by the UNDG ITF would have been much less feasible if the fund had not been in place. On one hand, the availability of funding under the UNDG ITF enabled the UN agencies to undertake a coordinated approach to planning, implementation and reporting. Resource mobilization costs have been very low especially during the initial few years of UNDF ITF and efforts required were lower, especially at the start of the UNDG ITF's life when financial resources were abundant. On the other hand, coordination for project design through the cluster and the Sector Outcome Team (SOT) mechanisms enabled the UN agencies to reduce duplication, ensure programmatic synergies and work jointly.

As the first MDTF to be administered by the UN, the UNDG ITF experience has demonstrated the UN system's ability to adapt to the fast-evolving challenges of an unusual post-conflict environment. The significant improvements and shifts in the operational parameters and the status of development parameters indicate the commitment and the abilities of the UN and its partners to effectively meet the terms set out in the IRFFI ToR for the benefit of the people of Iraq. The varying degree of stakeholder involvement has had varying effects on the programmatic and operational dimensions of the UNDG ITF. Over time and to a great extent, however, the UN managed to enhance stakeholder engagement in the spirit of national ownership, mutual accountability, and improved management for results.

Lessons learned—things that could be done better

As elaborated in the report, there are many lessons learned that suggest need for further improvement not only for the next phase of multi-donor funding for Iraq but also for other UN-administered MDTFs. Of particular importance in the context of a post-conflict situation is the need to maintain simultaneous focus on short- and long-term (transition) needs and priorities from the very outset. The longer-term vision should be reflected in the short-term interventions. In line with the IRFFI ToR, a high proportion of UNDG ITF programmes and projects had a short-term focus, combined with a mandate to implement quickly and show results. This made sense for emergency interventions and was also in line with the donor agenda to provide quick, demonstrable support to the people of Iraq. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it indicates a missed opportunity to plan for transition from short-term needs to the longer-term development. The missed opportunity can be attributed to two primary factors:

– The GoI's involvement in defining the priorities for the UNDG ITF interventions was not optimized.

While the GoI was involved in the process by design, real GoI counterpart contribution and engagement varied by agency, sector and the project being implemented.

– The focus on short-term results and quick results-oriented recovery and rehabilitation projects continued until 2008, after which the focus shifted to institutional and capacity development with a long-term development focus. The lack of attention to the long-term was in itself an obstacle to the implementation of many projects. For example, weaknesses in institutional capacity and processes of government counterparts, as well as weak or non-existent codes and regulations, caused delays in project implementation. A country that is rebuilding from scratch warrants as much focus on longterm development, including the development and strengthening of institutional, governance and human assets, as key immediate and shorter-term needs such as rehabilitation of basic services and infrastructure.

Most donors are insistent on earmarking their contributions to specific areas and/or agencies in line with their own aid agendas. By doing so, the donors feel they are better able to track the use of their contributions and have some demonstrable visibility. These donors persist in demanding that almost all their contributions be earmarked and continue to complain, despite significant improvements, about the UNDG ITF reporting by the MDTF Office. The PwC opines that the donors and the UN must resolve this particular issue in light of the Paris Declaration to realistically manage the donor expectations in any future MDTF. At the same time, both the donors and the UN need to provide much greater initial focus on setting up strong, consistent, independent, high quality monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes which will provide the required and accessible levels of detail and transparency. A credible accountability mechanism will generate increased levels of trust and will provide timely, reliable and evidence-based information to all stakeholders for improved decision making and policy setting.

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)
IP Outcome 1 Strengthened institutions, processes and regulatory frameworks of national and local governance							
IP Output 1.1 GOI and UNCT supported to generate lessons on Development and operational effectiveness of the UNDG-Iraq Trust Fund.	Indicator 1.1.1 Selection and contracting of Consulting firm.	No contracting of Consulting firm	Confirmation of contracting of Consulting firm	Yes		Contract	UNOPS financial records. Records kept in project blue file.
	Indicator 1.1.2 Inception/ scoping mission for the Lessons Learned Exercise.	No Inception meeting	Inception Meeting	Yes		Minutes of meeting	Project minutes. Records kept in project blue file.
	1.1.3: Agreement on methodology and detailed work plan.	No Agreement on methodology and detailed work plan.	Preparing Agreement on methodology and detailed work plan.	Yes		Agreed detailed work plan	Work plan agreed by stakeholders and kept in project blue file.
	1.1.4: Participate at the initial stakeholder meeting to launch the LL process evaluation process.	No participation at the initial stakeholder meeting to launch the LL process evaluation process.	Participation at initial stakeholder meeting to launch the LL process evaluation process.	Yes		Announcement of launch of process	Formal letters and/ or emails sent out introducing PWC to stakeholders to begin evaluations.

	1.1.5: Review of documents, reports, supporting materials	No review of documents or reports	Review of documents and reports and consolidation of them	Yes		Reference to key information from previous reports in draft and final	Copy of the final report, draft reports to be found in Project Blue File and also on line on the MPTF website.
	1.1.6: Meetings with relevant stakeholders.	No Meetings with relevant stakeholders.	Meetings with relevant stakeholders.	Yes		Meeting minutes and reference to meetings in draft	Copy of meeting minutes and references in draft report. Location within project Blue File.
	1.1.7: Finalise questionnaires for primary data collection.	No questionnaires for primary data collection	Questionnaires for primary data collection	Yes		Questionnaire and responses	Responses to questionnaires references in report draft. Report draft in project files.
	1.1.8: Field visits.	No Field visits.	Field visits	Yes		Field visit reports	Reports of field visits circulated to project team, and referenced in draft reports.
	1.1.9: Undertake data analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data acquired from the field work and data collection processes following the LL themes and key questions.	No data analysis	Data analysis	Yes		Data analysis in draft and final report.	Final report on line at MPTF website and copy within the project blue file.
	1.1.10: Review of the UNDG	No review of programme/	Review and distilled	Yes		Report on review and	Draft report and final both referenced other review performed on the IRFFI.

	ITF programme/ project evaluations and the consolidated evaluation report as well as World Bank programme evaluations to distil lessons, case studies on operational and development effectiveness at project/ programme level.	project evaluations	lessons from case studies			distilled lessons	
	1.1.11: Preparation of the draft Lessons Learned report.	No draft LL Report	Draft LL Report	Yes		Copy of Draft Report	Draft report copy located within project files.
	1.1.12: Presentation on draft findings/ report to SC and MDTF, IRFFI Donor Committee, UNDG ITF Steering Committee and GoI.	No presentation	Presentation	Yes		Copy of Presentation	Draft presentation located within project files.
	1.1.13: Finalisation of	No final report	Final Report	Yes		Final Copy of Report	mdtf.undp.org/document/download/8088 and hard copy with project files.

	the Report based on feedback from all relevant stakeholders.						
	1.1.14: Submission of LL report to MDTF/ SCSSO.	No submission of final report	Submission of Final Report	Yes		Posting on website of MDTF	mdtf.undp.org/document/download/8088
	1.1.15: Dissemination of the UNDG LLE document (a meeting will be organized in Baghdad to share the findings, key lessons learned and recommendations from the LLE).	No dissemination of reports	Dissemination of reports to stakeholders	Yes		Feedback on final report from stakeholders	Feedback given to IRFFI/ ITF on report.