

# **Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-21**

## ***Support to National Electoral Observer Groups for the Electoral Events of Iraq 2009 - 2010***

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## List of Acronyms

ACHRS	Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FES	Frederich Ebert Stiftung
GoI	Government of Iraq
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
ICI	International Compact with Iraq
IDFN	Iraqi Democratic Future Network
IEAT	International Elections Assistance Team
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq
ITF	Iraq Trust Fund
NDS	(Iraq) National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDG ITF	United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office of Project Services
VRU	Voter Registration Update

## I. Executive Summary

A multitude of United Nations (UN) agencies have implemented projects from the multi-donor United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund (UNDG ITF) over the last five years. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has received more than \$224 million in approved projects from the UNDG ITF since 2004. With the closing of the ITF, UNOPS, along with other UN agencies was tasked to conduct evaluations of specific ITF-funded projects. These evaluations are expected to generate lessons that will feed into the overall UNDG ITF lessons learned initiative for broader international and external information sharing. It will also aid in the design of future programmes and similar engagements. These evaluations should be undertaken in 2009-2010 in a participatory, objective, credible, and impartial manner.<sup>1</sup>

The following report is an independent evaluation of the UNDG ITF project number G11-21 “Support to National Electoral Observer Groups for the Electoral Events of Iraq 2009 – 2010.” Activities were implemented by UNOPS, together with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), International Elections Assistance Team (IEAT). The project had a timeframe of nine months (July 17, 2009 – April 16, 2010), and a budget of \$8,000,000. G11-21 was selected for evaluation as per the UNDG ITF criteria because it had been submitted and approved under the “fast-track” mechanism.

This project was evaluated over a one-month period using a combination of primary and secondary data collection. The consultant utilized an evaluation approach that was feasible given the timeframe and resources available, but also allowed for meaningful project analysis and gathering of lessons learned. The main sources of data used for this evaluation include key informant interviews with project management and stakeholders, a systematic review of all relevant project documents and reports from both UNOPS/UNAMI, and its two partners the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), as well as a literature review of published papers and other relevant articles on elections and electoral observers (both in Iraq and globally).

This evaluation commenced shortly after the Iraq Parliamentary Election held on March 7, 2010, the final and most significant electoral event to be observed under this project. As all ITF evaluations had to be submitted by April 2010, the consultant was not able to evaluate the outcomes and impacts that this project specifically had on the Parliamentary Election. Further details will be provided in the section on key challenges on page ten.

This report seeks both to provide recommendations and lessons learned to UNOPS/UNAMI on this specific project’s design and implementation, as well as to the overall UNDG ITF on larger funding mechanism issues. There are project successes that are unique to the Iraq context, but also lessons that can be utilized in future post-conflict / election programmes. These lessons learned can be found under Findings (Section V) as well as in Lessons and Generalizations (Section VI.)

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<sup>1</sup> Criteria for the Selection of UNDG ITF Projects to Be Evaluated, September 2009

## II. Introduction: Background and Context of the Programme

Three major electoral events were scheduled to occur in Iraq during 2009 and 2010. These events included:

- i) The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Kurdistan on July 25, 2009 where the citizens of the three Kurdish governorates (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk) would choose the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and their representatives in the region's parliament. This election would be organized as per the April 2009 election law approved by the Kurdish Parliament, where elections would be based on closed lists.
- ii) The Voter Registration Update (VRU) in August 2009 in all governorates of Iraq (to prepare for the Iraq Parliamentary Elections), to occur over a two to three week period.
- iii) The Iraqi Parliament Elections, originally scheduled for January 2010 but ultimately delayed until March 7, 2010. This would be the third parliamentary election in five years, and the fifth major electoral event in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Election observation is one of the most transparent and methodical ways to promote and encourage democracy and human rights.<sup>2</sup> It contributes to building public confidence in electoral processes, assists with deterring fraud, violence and intimidation, and overall strengthens democratic institutions.<sup>3</sup> In a post-conflict state such as Iraq, it would be critical to ensure that there were adequate numbers of electoral observers at all electoral events. Given the importance of quality observation, it is not surprising that the UN and other external donors had been supporting electoral observers in Iraq since 2005.

It is important to note that electoral events would be occurring in Iraq in a time where living conditions were improving and the overall security situation was stabilizing. Levels of violence had dramatically dropped since the height of the insurgency in 2006-2007<sup>4</sup>. For the first time, Iraq was also seeing political differences solved by peaceful competition and rather than violence, and cross-sectarian alliances growing between different religions, ethnicities and regions<sup>5</sup>. There were grounds to believe that Iraq's post-war wounds were healing and that the primary challenge had become one of state building. Despite a spate of high-profile attacks in Baghdad and lower-level ones elsewhere, violence was down. Politics took centre stage. The outcome of the January 2009 provincial elections was a setback to the more openly sectarian parties and brought a change in local government.<sup>6</sup> It was even more critical to ensure that three electoral events mentioned above could be deemed fair and transparent in order to capitalize on these positive changes in Iraq, and move further towards peace and stability.

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<sup>2</sup> Election Observation, A Decade of Monitoring the People and The Practice, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2008

<sup>3</sup> European Union, Election Observation and Assistance, [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/human\\_rights/election\\_observation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/election_observation/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Iraq: Security Trends, Anthony H. Cordesman Arleigh, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, November 2009

<sup>5</sup> Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks, Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Services, December 8, 2009

<sup>6</sup> Iraq's Uncertain Future: Elections and Beyond, Middle East Report No 94, International Crisis Group, 25 February 2010

The ability of the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC) to effectively and fairly organize the three electoral events would be a huge benchmark of democratic progress. Confirmation of this (which would be reported on by neutral electoral observers) could potentially increase the IHEC's credibility and reputation both within Iraq and in the international community. Therefore, ensuring appropriate electoral observation at all three events could also have a significantly positive impact on future elections in Iraq.

This project built on extensive experience of UNOPS/UNAMI in supporting elections in Iraq, as well as documented lessons learned from the past electoral events. This included support to national NGO networks for the training and mobilization of electoral observers for Voter Registration and Parliament Elections of 2005, the Voter Registration Update in 2008, and the January 2009 Provincial Elections in 14 governorates throughout the country. UNOPS/UNAMI had partnered with the international NGOs Frederick Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS)<sup>7</sup> on past observation projects, both of which have technical and practical experience working on electoral observation globally and in Iraq. This project built upon the internal lessons learned and best practice from these NGOs, as well as from the previous partnerships between them and UNOPS/UNAMI.

This project also built on more than five years of experience of support to IHEC from the International Electoral Assistance Team (or the IEAT, which includes UNOPS and UNAMI amongst other agencies.) This support has included numerous projects to increase the operational and technical capacities of the IHEC to effectively administer elections and referendum in Iraq. Although this project did not support the IHEC directly, confirmation that the electoral events of 2009-2010 were held fairly and transparently would directly help to boost the IHEC's reputation on both national and international levels.

### *Fast Track*

This project was submitted for funding in June 2009, with a start date of July 16, 2009. The proposal was submitted with such a short turnaround time due to the fact that the ITF and other international donors had been explicitly clear that there would be no additional funds for electoral observers (as four electoral observer projects had been previously funded). Donors felt that there had been enough observers already funded / trained, and that continuing to fund observers would not be a sustainable mechanism for electoral events in the future. However, with three major electoral events scheduled for 2009-2010 and not enough funding available to ensure adequate numbers of observers available from other sources, the ITF decided to provide funding for a fifth observer project and asked UNOPS/UNAMI to formally submit a project proposal.

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<sup>7</sup> The National Democratic Institute (NDI) had also partnered with UNOPS/UNAMI on the past election events, however they are not mentioned here as they would not be directly involved with this fifth observer project.

### **III. Description of the Project / Programme**

#### ***a. Logic Theory***

This project had a dual-pronged goal of aiming to strengthen the capacity of Iraqi electoral observation networks while simultaneously ensuring that the three major electoral events of 2009 and 2010 were successfully and effectively observed. This would be achieved through the provision of financial and technical support to FES and ACHRS who would be responsible for the following results:

- 5,000 electoral observers trained for the KRG election.
- At least 20% of trainees for the KRG election are female.
- 30,000 electoral observers updated on electoral law prior to the KRG and Iraq Parliament elections.
- 7,000 electoral observers mobilized for the KRG elections.
- 4,900 electoral observers mobilized for the Voter Registration Update (VRU).
- 29,200 electoral observers mobilized for the Iraq Parliament Elections.
- 41,400 electoral observers accredited for the KRG elections, VRU, and parliamentary elections.
- At least 20% of female observers mobilized for each electoral event.

As it was expected that security restrictions would mean only a small number of international observers would be deployed to Iraq for these electoral events, the project stressed that it was critical to mobilize an adequate number of well-trained Iraqi observers. This was a quantitative measure in terms of appropriate geographic coverage throughout all 18 governorates, but also in terms of community representation to allow for observers from the various ethnicities and sectarian groups throughout the country. Ensuring appropriate observation would not only contribute to ensuring fair and transparent elections, but also increase the Iraqi and international acceptance of the electoral results.

In addition to directly mobilizing trained Iraqi observers for three events, the project also sought to gauge the work of the IHEC in its ability to manage elections in Iraq. Ensuring that observers were on the ground would help to independently verify (or not) that elections were being conducted in an open and transparent manner. Moreover, any constructive comments or negative reports could help to identify areas for future improvement and lessons learned for the IHEC.

#### ***b. External Factors Affecting Success***

The project conducted a thorough analysis of the various factors that would have the potential to affect the successful realization of project objectives and activities. The following factors are adapted from pages 17-18 of the original project proposal:

- Security situation: If the security situation on the ground prevents observers from attending training or accessing polling stations on Election Day, then this will have a

negative impact on the coverage of the electoral event on the ground. Mitigating measures have been taken by the IHEC who, supported by UNOPS and UNAMI, are in dialogue with various actors in the field of security provision (Iraqi army, police, multi-national forces) to ensure that the situation on the ground is safe enough for voters and observers to come to the polling centres and to vote and observe in a protected environment. During previous electoral events information has shown that during the actual electoral event security tends to be better as the Government of Iraq deploys higher numbers of security forces. For the trainings, the responsibility will lie with the local NGOs to organize the sessions in a safe area or to postpone individual trainings in accordance with the particular security situation in the area at the time.

- Available capacity of implementing partners: If local NGO partners face problems in identifying the planned number of observers, implementing the planned number of training sessions or mobilizing them on Election Day, then this would negatively impact on the results of this Project. Mitigating measures are taken by engaging ACHRS and FES who have been in dialogue with their local partners discussing and reviewing their capacity to achieve the results described and by assigning the responsibility for geographical coverage in each governorate to NGO partners based on their assessment. In addition, this project seeks to mobilize a fewer number of observers than previous observer projects, requesting that the partner organizations focus on quality of observers. Financially, UNOPS will only reimburse costs for actual participation and successful mobilization numbers.
- Political development: The project and its work plan are designed under the assumptions (a) that there will be sufficient time prior to the Election Day to train observers and (b) that the Iraq Parliamentary Elections (the last of the three electoral events covered by this project) will take place no later than February 2010. If the elections were postponed beyond February 2010, this would require a project extension to be submitted to the funding source (without budget movements and change in scope).
- Exit strategy: If the situation arises where the UN would wish to terminate the project before completion of all activities, then this would require the terminating of the agreements with FES and ACHRS (which are to be signed in the first project phase). The UNOPS Project team, supported by the UNOPS Legal Office, will ensure that the tri-partite contract agreement between UNOPS, UNAMI and ACHRS/FES will make provision for such early termination to be carried out without significant risk to the UN (and thus the funding source). UNOPS project staff will be engaged only on short-period contracts with short notices for termination as well.

### ***c. Logical Framework***

Please see the project's page logical framework attached as Annex I at the end of this report.



#### **IV. Evaluation Methodology and Approach**

The consultant adhered to guidelines as outlined in the UNOPS ITF Evaluation Terms of Reference (attached as Annex III) in order to determine an evaluation approach that was feasible and realistic given the time and resources available, as well as allowed for meaningful project analysis and gathering of lessons learned.

##### ***Evaluation Purpose***

The purpose of this evaluation is to generate lessons that will feed into the proposed United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund (UNDG ITF) lessons learned initiative for broader internal and external information sharing. It will also aid into design of future programme and similar engagements.<sup>8</sup> This purpose is the same for all ITF project evaluations and has not been adjusted.

##### ***Evaluation Intent***

This is a formative project evaluation, and as such will examine aspects of the delivery of the programme, the quality of its implementation, and assess the organizational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, etc.

##### ***Evaluation Scope and Methodology***

This project was evaluated over a one-month period through a combination of primary and secondary data collection. This included key informant interviews with project management and partners (please see Annex II for the complete list of interviews), a systematic review of all relevant project documents (including the original proposal, all quarterly and bi-annual reports, budget revision request, no-cost extension requests), as well as a literature review on relevant articles and published papers. Amongst others, the consultant utilized:

- How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A-Z Guide, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1995
- Iraq's National Development Strategy 2005-2007
- The International Compact With Iraq, including its updated Joint Monitoring Matrices of 2007 and 2008
- Iraq and the Kurds: Trouble Along the Trigger Line, Middle East Report N°88, 8 July 2009, International Crisis Group
- Iraq's Uncertain Future: Elections and Beyond, Middle East Report N°9, 25 February 2010, International Crisis Group

##### ***Evaluation Objectives***

The following are the objectives of all UNOPS ITF project evaluations. They were designed based on the common ITF guidelines<sup>9</sup> and take into account evaluation scope, duration, and resources available.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> UNDG ITG Programme / Project Evaluations, Terms of Reference With Guidance

- *Development Results:* To assess the achieved progress and results against stipulated programme / project results and objectives on all stakeholders, especially beneficiary groups
- *Efficiency and Effectiveness:* To assess the efficiency of the programme / project interventions and understand the effectiveness of programme / project interventions in addressing the underlying problem(s)
- *Relevance:* To assess the relevance of programme / project components in addressing the needs and issues of beneficiary groups
- *Partnership:* To understand the extent to which this programme / project has contributed to forging partnership at various levels with the Government of Iraq, Civil Society and UN/ donors
- *Lessons Learned:* To generate lessons on good practices based on assessment from the aforementioned evaluation objectives.

### ***Evaluation Questions***

The consultant was provided with fifteen questions that the project evaluation needed to answer and investigate. These questions are in the categories as listed in the above objectives: development results, efficiency and effectiveness, relevance, partnership, lessons learned, as well as the two additional areas of sustainability and operational effectiveness. These questions are listed in the TOR in Annex III and are addressed in section V of this report.

### ***Key Challenges / Limitations***

There was one principal issue that affected the results of this project evaluation:

*Results of the Final Electoral Activity / Evaluation Schedule:* The deadline for all evaluations to the ITF is April 2010. As the Iraq Parliamentary elections were only conducted on March 7, reports from the FES and ACHRS regarding the work of the electoral observers have yet to be finalized. Although the training activities for all observers were completed in late 2009, the actual observation has not yet been analyzed. This means that the consultant was not able to incorporate results from the most important of the three electoral events of 2009-2010 into this evaluation report.

The consultant was able to meet with key members of the project team from UNAMI, UNOPS, FES and ACHRS. It would have also been beneficial to meet with observers themselves, or with representatives from the NGO networks who supported the observers. Given that i) parliamentary election activities are still ongoing and these personnel are quite busy and ii) travel to Baghdad was not possible during the allocated time for this evaluation, interviews with these project stakeholders were not possible. Future evaluations for projects of this nature should bear in mind the time required for the completion of electoral activities and a final evaluation (please also see Lesson One in the lessons learned section on page 28).

## V. Findings

This section of the evaluation report will first examine the extent to which this project achieved its set outputs as per its original logical framework. As project activities were just completed (the evaluation began at the same time as observers were mobilized for the March 7<sup>th</sup> parliamentary elections), it is not possible to fully assess whether or not this project achieved its ultimate outcomes, as there is little official information available on this last and quite critical event at this time.

### a. Logical Framework Analysis

Please note that this project did not have a goal, as per general standards in monitoring and evaluation, and therefore measurement at this highest level is not possible. In addition, although the project had set outcomes and outputs (with outcomes understood to be what is commonly referred to as an “objective”) in its logical framework, there were no indicators, means of verification or a baseline set for the outcomes. Therefore any analysis conducted by the consultant as to the achievement per outcome would be subjective and based on an individual opinion rather than pre-determined and UNOPS/UNAMI agreed upon measurements of success. As such analysis can provide little data in terms of best practice or genuine lessons learned, this evaluation will therefore only examine indicators at the output level to assess the level of results achieved. This issue will be discussed in further detail under question 14 on page 23.

**Table 1: Results Achieved Per Output<sup>10</sup>**

<b>Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of electoral observer networks in Iraq</b>			
<b>Output 1.1</b>	<b>Original Indicators</b>	<b>Indicator Target</b>	<b>Indicator Progress as of 03/2010</b>
Enhanced capacities of electoral observers to manage the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner	Number of NGOs participating in the electoral observation process.	- 25 NGOs	- 16 NGOs from FES - 35 NGOs from ACHRS - Total 51 NGOs
	Number of male and female electoral observers provided with full training on elections rules and regulations.	- 5,000 observers trained and 2,000 updated on electoral law prior to the KRG elections  - 28,000 observers updated on electoral law prior to the Iraq Parliamentary Elections	- 4,995 trained (2,500 trained by ACHRS + 2,495 from FES) and 2005 updated (1,000 from ACHRS + 1,005 from FES +)  - 28,002 observers updated by the end December 2009 (14,002 trained by FES +14,000 trained by ACHRS)
	Number of male and	- 20% of female trainees	- KRG elections: 33% of trained were female (1173/3500 from FES

<sup>10</sup> The following table has been slightly modified from the original logical framework to reflect the indicators as reported on by UNOPS/UNAMI in their narrative updates. The only change was to breakdown 30,000 observers updated on electoral law to 2,000 updated before the KRG elections and 28,000 before the parliament elections. This distinction was not in the original logframe.

	female electoral observers provided with refresher training as election observers.		and 1,132/3,500 from ACHRS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iraq Parliamentary Elections: 22% of trainees were female (3,021/14,002 from FES and 3,230/14,000 from ACHRS)</li> <li>- Total: 26% (8,556/32,997)</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2: Successful observation of electoral events in Iraq in 2009/2010</b>			
<b>Output 2.1</b>	<b>Original Indicators</b>	<b>Indicator Target</b>	<b>Indicator Progress as of 03/2010</b>
Civil society mobilized to fully participate in Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner	Number of electoral observers accredited for the for the observation of the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 41,100 electoral observers accredited for Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the CoR Elections</li> <li>- At least 20% female observers accredited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number not available at this time. This will be measured after the final reports on the CoR elections are received from both FES and ACHRS.</li> </ul>
	Number of electoral observers (male/female) mobilized for Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7,000 Observers mobilized for the Kurdistan Elections</li> <li>- 4,900 Observers mobilized for the Voter Registration Update (VRU)</li> <li>- 29,200 Observers mobilized for the CoR Elections</li> <li>- At least 20% female observers mobilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7,025 Observers mobilized for the KRG Election (3,500 from ACHRS + 3,525 from FES)</li> <li>- 4,900 Observers mobilized for the VRU (2,450 from ACHRS and FES each)</li> <li>- As the CoR election had just occurred, this indicator could not be measured during the evaluation. However, with 28,000 observers trained prior to the March elections it can be assumed they were mobilized for the event.</li> <li>- As above, it can be assumed that at least 20% of observers will be female, as 22% of the trainees were female.</li> </ul>

**b. Evaluation Questions as per the UNOPS ITF Guidelines**

***Development Results***

1. *What have been the specific benefits of the project to different beneficiary groups, including men, women, children, youth, and marginalized population groups?*

The original project proposal listed the project’s beneficiaries as:

- Direct project beneficiaries are the observer groups inside Iraq that will receive support through the capacity building training provided by the project. This will include 35,000 Iraqis who will receive observation training or update on previous training in Iraq and a total of 41,100 Iraqis who will receive a small compensation for their active observation and reporting on the elections.
- 20 percent of the project beneficiaries are women. It is envisaged that focusing on deploying female observers will eventually empower women to participate in the growing culture of democracy in Iraq by improving their access to and position within civil society organizations playing an active role in Iraq’s governance in general and the electoral process in particular.
- Ultimately, Iraqi voters will benefit from an improved electoral framework granting comprehensive participation and fair process.

The impacts made on the targeted beneficiaries will be examined below, comparing the original targets with the actual results / impacts achieved.

**Table 2: Project Results / Impact on Beneficiaries**

Beneficiary Target	Actual Results / Impact to Date
35,000 Iraqis participate in election observation training or undergo a training update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ According to project reports, 32,997 Iraqis were either trained or underwent a refresher training over the last eight months.</li> <li>▪ As the project is not yet complete, this number may change in the final report. At present however it appears that this target will be met.</li> </ul>
41,000 Iraqis actively observe and report upon the electoral events of 2009-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This project focused on observing three electoral events in 2009 and 2010, the most significant of which (Iraq-wide parliamentary elections) occurred the day before this evaluation began. Therefore this target cannot be appropriately reported on at this time.</li> <li>▪ After the KRG elections and VRU of 2009, 11,925 Iraqis had observed and reported upon electoral events. It can be assumed that barring any major obstacles, the project will meet this target once the final observer numbers are recorded.</li> </ul>
20% of trained and mobilized observers are female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As mentioned above, the final number of observers mobilized has currently not been reported.</li> <li>▪ Training was provided for 32,997 Iraqis, with 26% (8,556) female participants.</li> </ul>
The general Iraqi public benefits from an improved electoral framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the absence of any large-scale population data, it is impossible to specifically gauge the benefits to the general Iraqi public. It will only be possible to assess this in the next months / years after additional electoral events are organized.</li> </ul>

2. *How has the project has contributed to national priorities as identified in the Iraq National Development Strategy (NDS), the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?*

This project aimed to contribute to the following goals:

- ICI 3.1.2: Implementation of a political/legislative timetable
- NDS: Strength good governance and improve security
- MDG: Although the project did not specifically support any one MDG, it would contribute indirectly to all the MDGs, as per the proposal “the widespread acceptance of Iraqi electoral results will facilitate a general environment conducive to their more effective realization”.
- MDG 3: To a small extent the project would address MGD 3 “Promote gender equity and empower women” as the project proposal provided for at least 20% of observers to be female.

*ICI:* Both the GoI and international development partners often utilize the Joint Monitoring Matrix<sup>11</sup> to monitor the implementation of the ICI (and was used by this consultant to analyze other UNOPS ITF projects.) However the ICI does not have any benchmarks that specifically examine elections, and while this project aimed to support ICI 3.1.2: implementation of a political/legislative timetable, it is impossible to measure this without set indicators for success.

Therefore, an alternative mechanism to measure how this project contributed towards the ICI is to utilize the UN Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008-2010,<sup>12</sup> developed jointly by the UN and GoI. Under the Governance sector of this plan, Outcome 1 is defined as “Strengthened electoral process in Iraq”, with Output 1.4 as “Capacity of electoral and media observers strengthened.”<sup>13</sup> This project has directly contributed towards this aim, with more than 32,000 electoral observers effectively trained to date.

*NDS:* There were no set indicators within the NDS that dictated how to measure “Strengthening good governance and security.” In order to know whether this project contributed to this result, it is important to first define what good governance means. The World Bank states “Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs.”<sup>14</sup> After the KRG elections and VRU in 2009, both FES and ACHRS held press conferences / distributed public reports on the results, comments and criticism from their electoral observers. These were shared both with the public and with the IHEC directly. Given the support from the UN to both the observer projects and to increasing the capacity of the IHEC, it is likely that the observer critiques of the electoral events will be taken into consideration for future electoral planning and execution. This will contribute towards strengthening good governance in Iraq, especially increasing the transparency of electoral processes. In addition, this project also

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.iraqcompact.org/ici\\_document/AnnexIV\\_JMM\\_English2008.pdf](http://www.iraqcompact.org/ici_document/AnnexIV_JMM_English2008.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008-2010, June 2008

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pages 21-22

<sup>14</sup> World Bank in Governance: The World Banks Experience, July 2004

contributed towards building “a strong civil society participating in public affairs”. As stated numerous times in the project proposal and reports, it is not yet clear how electoral observers will be funded in the future as there is unwillingness from the UN or external donors to fund such activities in the future (and they only decided to fund this project one month prior to the KRG elections of July 2009.) However, this project will leave more than 30,000 trained observers, with links to 51 NGOs involved and engaged in the electoral processes in Iraq, a definite contribution towards strengthening civil society and governance in Iraq.

The strengthening of security in Iraq is based on a variety of complex factors, and it would be difficult to show any causal link between this project and an improvement (or not) in the security situation.

*MDG:* As mentioned above, this project did not aim to support any one MDG. Instead, the logic was that acceptance of electoral results would contribute towards increasing good governance and encouraging a political / community environment more favourable to the realization of all the MDGs. Given this indirect linkage, it is not possible to specifically measure how the project contributed to the realization of the MDGs.

However the project endeavoured to have 20% of female observers, which is linked to MDG 3. With regards to MDG 3, the indicators to measure its achievement examine education, employment, and parliamentary seats, and are therefore not relevant to this project. As per the original logical framework, 20% of women were supposed to be trained and accredited as observers under this project. Although the final number of observers who participated in the Iraqi Parliamentary elections of March 2010 has yet to be reported, given that 26% of observers trained were female it can be assumed that a similar percentage of women were involved in electoral observation.

### ***Efficiency and Effectiveness***

#### ***3. Has the programme / project responded to the underlying development issues that provided rationale for the programme/ project? How?***

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of this project in addressing the underlying development issues, it is first important to identify the specific justification for this project’s activities. These included:

- Given that international observers were expected to be minimal, ensuring funding for the training and mobilization of national observers for these three electoral events would help to legitimize the electoral processes and safeguard the results.
- In a volatile and uncertain electoral environment such as Iraq, a credible monitoring operation would improve the prospects for a fair election in which the public and politicians accept the legitimacy of the process<sup>15</sup>.
- Public reporting by observers will also serve to increase transparency and promote accountability, and thereby increase public acceptance of the electoral results.

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<sup>15</sup> *How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A-Z Guide*, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1995, page 15

- Nascent civil society organizations in Iraq have limited access to funding sources, and are especially fragile in terms of their independence from the political / economic / social agendas of available (national) donors. NGOs involved in electoral observation would therefore benefit from having their electoral activities funded from a neutral source such as the UN.
- The January 2009 governorate elections received electoral observer training and mobilization support from the UN. Therefore it would make sense for the KRG elections of July 2009 to receive the same level of support in order to “provide an equal opportunity for democratic advancement in all parts of Iraq and at all political institutional levels.”<sup>16</sup>

Progress and results made towards addressing each of these development concerns will be detailed in Table Three below, as well as an assessment of whether the issue has been sufficiently addressed. Please note that the results do not include observer activities implemented under the March 2010 elections, as this data is not yet available.

**Table 3: Project’s Contribution Towards Underlying Development Issues**

Underlying Development Issue	Achievements / Results	Has the Issue Been Addressed?
a. Need to ensure adequate funding for the training and mobilization of electoral observers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This project allocated \$8,000,000 to ensure that there would be enough observers trained and deployed for the three electoral events of 2009-2010.</li> <li>▪ Although the final and largest electoral event was just completed, reports thus far indicate that there were adequate numbers of observers trained / deployed for the KRG elections and the VRU, and an adequate number of observers trained and ready for the parliamentary election of March 2010.</li> </ul>	Yes this issue has been satisfactorily addressed for the 2009-2010 electoral events. However, advocacy, fundraising and strategic planning will have to be conducted by FES, ACHRS along with the UN to ensure that there is adequate funding for domestic observers for future electoral events. This is particularly critical with the closure of the UNDG ITF, which funded observers for electoral events in Iraq since 2003.
b. A credible monitoring operation would help to ensure legitimacy of the electoral events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both FES and ACHRS are agencies with experience in electoral observation and particularly observation in Iraq. They were involved with previous observation projects, and received strong positive reviews from their UN partners.</li> <li>▪ For the KRG elections and VRU, FES and ACHRS deployed trained observers, and provided reports and analysis on the events to both UNOPS/UNAMI as well as the general public. While there is no standard indicator as to what makes an electoral observation operations “credible,” the work</li> </ul>	Yes, as ensuring that FES and ACHRS had adequate financial resources and linkages with the IHEC contributed to the legitimization of the electoral events of 2009-2010. It is likely that the two observation operations would not have existed without the support of UNOPS/UNAMI.

<sup>16</sup> G11-21 project proposal page 5



	reports and analysis from FES and ACHRS certainly helped to legitimize the electoral events of 2009-2010.	
c. Public reporting by observers will help to public acceptance of the electoral results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FES and ACHRS published their reports on the KRG elections and VRU on their website.</li> <li>▪ Both also held press conferences (FES on July 30 and ACHRS on August 8, 2009.)</li> <li>▪ FES observers were also interviewed on variety of Iraqi television programmes covering the KRG elections.</li> </ul>	This is difficult to measure with no objective means of verification (i.e. population-based survey) to know the exact effect of the observers' public outreach activities on the Iraqi public's acceptance of the electoral results. However as best practice dictates that public reporting by independent observers can contribute to public acceptance of electoral results, it can be assumed that the various public appearances and publications of FES and ACHRS contributed to the overall acceptance of the KRG elections in July 2009.
d. NGOs involved in electoral observation should have their electoral activities funded from a neutral source such as the UN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of the \$8,000,000 allocated for this project, \$7,041,160 was allocated for contracts to FES and ACHRS (88% of the total budget)</li> </ul>	Yes, as funds for observers from the UNDG ITF for the three electoral events of 2009-2010 ensured that were no other political / religious / regional agendas involved (to the extent possible). This will need to be considered and planned for future electoral events if the international community no longer intends to fund observers.
e. Provision of observer support to the KRG elections should be at the same levels as support provided to the January 2009 governorate elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FES trained / updated observers for the KRG elections, budget totaling \$343,275.</li> <li>▪ ACHRS trained / updated observers for the KRG elections, budget totaling \$343,275.</li> </ul>	Yes, as it is likely that adequate numbers of qualified observers for the KRG elections would not have been funded if not for UNOPS/UNAMI support.

*4. How have programme / project results contributed to improved access and utilization of services?*

Unlike many other development programmes, this project was not designed specifically to increase access to or utilization of services. Instead, project activities rather sought to ensure that there were adequate numbers of trained electoral observers mobilized for the KRG elections, and VRU in 2009, and the Iraqi Parliamentary elections of 2010. Ensuring observer coverage would allow for the results of the electoral events to be seen as fair and transparent in both national and international arenas.

In the absence of any population-based data, it is not possible to determine the specific effects that domestic observers had, for example, on encouraging more Iraqis to vote (as they thought it would be a more credible election) or encouraging Iraqis to trust in the electoral results. However, according to both FES and ACHRS, observers were pivotal in

getting both politicians and the general public to believe in the accuracy of the electoral events. According to FES “When losers cried foul, IHEC and others were referring to the reports of the observers...which showed that there were some flaws but not massive manipulation...this is a cornerstone of why things remained peaceful after the elections”. Observer reports were also quoted by individual politicians, political groups, and the media after the electoral events, who used the information to both discuss the electoral event itself, as well as the fairness of the results. Therefore, while it is not possible to statistically demonstrate the impact that observers had on the electoral event, it is quite likely they had a highly positive contribution.

In addition, as a result of the specific critiques, observations and analysis provided by FES and ACHRS, it is expected that electoral service provision will be improved as the IHEC will (hopefully) incorporate these comments and lessons learned into future electoral events.

Finally this project contributed toward building the capacity of both Iraqi NGO networks as well as thousands of individuals to conduct quality electoral observation. This will contribute towards improving future service provision vis-à-vis election observation, as a strong capacity will already exist in country. Although specific procedures for elections may change in Iraq, the underlying principles of electoral observation that NGOs / individuals have been trained in will continue to be relevant and practical for any future electoral events.

5. *How did the programme / project engage with stakeholders and beneficiaries during project planning and implementation?*

*Engagement with stakeholders and beneficiaries during project planning:* The main beneficiaries of this project are the general Iraqi public and the electoral observers themselves. Therefore measuring engagement of this project with these two beneficiary groups during planning will provide little meaningful information. It is more useful to examine how UNOPS/UNAMI engaged with the two partners FES and ACHRS during the project planning stage.

As mentioned previously, this was the fifth electoral observer project funded by the ITF. All of these five projects have included FES and ACHRS (amongst others) as key project implementers. This project was designed using identified lessons learned that came about from both informal meetings between partners, as well as a discussion on national election observers at the IHEC Lessons Learned meeting in Istanbul in Spring 2009.

Although not a direct beneficiary as per the project proposal, the IHEC would also benefit from the three electoral events of 2009-2010 verified as being fair and transparent by independent observers. The IHEC was involved in project planning in so much as the project proposal for these activities was put together at the specific request of the IHEC Board of Commissioners to the UN. The Board asked the UN to provide funds for national observers when it became apparent that there was no viable alternative source of

funding at the three planned events of 2009-2010.<sup>17</sup>

*Engagement with stakeholders and beneficiaries during project implementation:* Given the need to ensure there was no conflict of interest with this project and UNOPS/UNAMI projects that supported the IHEC<sup>18</sup>, the implementation of project activities was directly managed by FES and ACHRS. Roles and responsibilities of both the partners and UN agencies were clearly spelled out in detailed tripartite agreements that delineated activities (including specific work plans and associated costs, the number of observers to be trained / updated, number of observers to be deployed per governorate etc), as well as reporting responsibilities and timelines. This allowed for FES and ACHRS to conduct their training and deployment of observers with a large degree of independence, but at the same time ensured that UNOPS/UNAMI were clearly aware of implementation plans and progress.

The successful past working relationship between UNOPS/UNAMI, FES and ACHRS, as well as the high quality and satisfaction of past results achieved helped to mitigate some of the inherent risk of sub-contracting to another agency to directly implement a project.

### **Relevance**

#### *6. How did the programme/ project contribute to local / national needs and priorities?*

The table below examines each of the project’s outputs, and determines how / if it contributed to the national needs and priorities of Iraqis in 2009-2010. When reading this table, please keep in mind the context with regards to the electoral events of 2009-2010, the significance of electoral observers, and the general context of Iraq as described on pages five and six.

**Table 4: Project’s Contribution Towards National/Local Needs and Priorities**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Did it contribute to national priorities?</b>
1. Enhanced capacities of electoral observers to manage the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes, this project ensured that adequate numbers of domestic observers were properly trained / updated in order to effectively observe the KRG elections, VRU, and Iraqi Parliamentary elections of 2009-2010. This contributed to priorities as outlined in the National Development Strategy (NDS) of 2005-7, and the UN-Iraq Joint Assistance Strategy (as explained in detail on page 15), the electoral benchmarks set by the US government for Iraq (which will determine US troop pull out) as well as other treaties / strategic plans developed by the GoI and the international community.</li> <li>▪ Iraqi citizens have traditionally been unable to participate in political decision-making, which included electing their local and national government. Over the last seven years Iraq regained its sovereignty, held successful provincial elections in 2009 and saw an increases in its peoples trust in the state.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> As mentioned earlier and clearly stated in the G11-21 project proposal, there originally was not supposed to be a fifth observer project, as the census was in the international community was that enough people had been trained and funded. However, UNOPS/UNAMI were asked to put together a proposal for support to electoral observations for the UNDG ITF in June 2009.

<sup>18</sup> UNOPS/UNAMI have been supporting the IHEC with a variety of operational and technical projects since 2004

<sup>19</sup> ABC/BBC/ARD/NHK Polls.

	As such the execution of fair and transparent elections in Iraq is a major priority for all Iraqis and ensuring that that the three electoral events of 2009-2010 has adequate electoral observation, (especially the parliament elections held in March), contributes highly to national priorities.
2. Civil society mobilized to fully participate in Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes, as supporting civil society organizations in Iraq to conduct quality electoral observation is in line with the national priority to build and strengthen nascent civil society and other community organizations. The Iraqi Constitution itself calls for a new role for civil society institutions, and for the creation of an enabling legal and political environment to facilitate citizens' participation in the process of political and social reconciliation and in strengthening democratic governance in Iraq.<sup>20</sup> With the start up of hundreds of NGOs, CSOs, and other non-political groups since the regime change in 2003, it is evident that Iraqis want to participate in stronger and more vibrant civil society. Therefore this project, which helped to i) train civil society to take part in electoral observation and ii) built linkages between civil society groups and the IHEC, certainly helped to contribute towards national priorities.</li> </ul>

7. *How were project strategies tailored to the current programme / project context?*

This development of this project's strategy was very much tailored to the local and national context. Details will be provided below as to how plans for each electoral event were customized to meet the conditions on the ground. However, it is firstly important to note how the project in general was tailored to the electoral context in Iraq. As mentioned earlier, the ITF and other international donors had originally stated they would not fund a fifth electoral observation project, as it was felt adequate numbers were already trained. This opinion was modified in June 2009, and when UNOPS/UNAMI were asked to submit a proposal to fund electoral observers, they had to design a strategy that would allow for the rapid training and mobilization of observers for the KRG elections (which would occur four weeks after the start of this project), without jeopardizing quality or effectiveness. The strategy designed therefore capitalized on the existing strong partnership between UNOPS/UNAMI, FES and ACHRS, as well as the documented lessons learned on how to improve electoral observation activities in Iraq.

*KRG Elections:* Although many observers had been trained in the past four UN-support observer projects, it was necessary to train additional observers for the KRG elections who were Kurdish speakers, and were knowledgeable about the new Kurdish electoral law and regulations. In addition, it was not possible to use many of the previously trained observers, as there would be a high security risk to the safety of observers to move from other governorates to the Kurdistan Region. Therefore the strategy for the KRG elections was not just a copy and paste from past elections but took into account the context and specificities of both the geography and political / ethnic sensitivities.

<sup>20</sup> Iraqi Constitution, Art 45

*Voter Registration Update:* The project's strategy for the VRU was also tailored to the local context as the deployment schedule designed focused on quality of mobilized observers rather than sheer quantity. It was determined that more observers would be deployed to areas that were considered political sensitive, had problems with past registration or posed higher security risks, such as Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar, and Diyala.

*Iraq Parliamentary Elections:* The project's strategy for the parliamentary elections was designed based on both the significant attention and weight that these elections would have on the future governance of Iraq, from both national and international perspectives. The March 2010 elections would be a critical measurement on the ability of Iraq to govern itself in a peaceful and democratic manner. Confirmation that the elections were held fairly and transparently would therefore have strong impacts on this measurement, again for both Iraqis as well as the international community. The project therefore designed a strategy for this massive electoral event that would ensure there were adequate numbers of well-trained electoral observers deployed during the electoral events. This strategy included the necessary technical and financial support to FES and ACHRS to bring about this result, including the required linkages to the IHEC and other GoI as needed.

### ***Partnerships***

8. *Has the programme / project forged new partnerships / strengthened existing partnerships and how?*

This project built upon an already existing and successful partnership between UNOPS and UNAMI, as well as between UNOPS, UNAMI, FES and ACHRS. All partners seemingly had a strong and trustful working relationship, and were committed to ensuring the success of the project. From the UN perspective, much of the operational / implementation success of this project can be attributed to the strong relationship between UNOPS and UNAMI. Each of the agencies brought different strengths and capacities to the relationship. This allowed for a clear division of labour and responsibility, but also the ability to implement the project in both a technically sound and operationally responsive manner.

In terms of the partnership between UNOPS/UNAMI with FES and ACHRS, as mentioned previously there was a great deal of trust between all four partners, with FES and ACHRS having already implemented successful observation projects with UNOPS/UNAMI (through the ITF) funding. This meant that there was less of a need to "test" out the partner's skills or capacities, and allowed for more efficient implementation. This was critical given that the project was approved only a month before the KRG elections.

From the NGO perspective, both FES and ACHRS commented very positively on the support they received from UNOPS/UNAMI. There were some issues raised on the timeliness of mechanisms for financial reporting / disbursement, but ultimately this is due to general UN regulations and not a specific criticism for this project. One of the partners commented that although the financial reporting rules appeared quite stringent

and inflexible, in fact they helped their organization in terms of improving their capacity to report with other donors in the future.

*9. To what extent has the programme / project contributed to capacity development of the involved partners?*

This project contributed to the training of more than 30,000 electoral observers in Iraq. Many of these observers were trained previously and only required refresher training to update them on the new electoral laws and procedures. In addition, as many of the observers had participated in previous elections, observation of the three events of 2009 and 2010 gave them additional practical experience, further contributing to their capacity development.

Although there were no concrete indicators to measure the change in knowledge or skills of the observers,<sup>21</sup> a significant indicator of the progress of observer capacity development can be measured by their perceived credibility in Iraq. For example, both FES and ACHRS reported that in previous electoral events they had to chase media organizations to attend observer press conferences, or cover reports about their findings / analysis. However for the last year of electoral events, media outlets were actively chasing the observer networks to get their opinions, were in attendance at their press conferences, and quoted the observer findings in a variety of outlets.

In addition, and possibly even more important than media linkages, is the relationship between the observers and the GoI, and the observers and the IHEC. FES reported that various politicians used their reports when they discussing election flaws in public fora. IHEC came to meet with the observers before the parliamentary elections, to make sure they had all the information they needed on electoral law and regulations prior to the event. IHEC representatives also attended press conferences organized by the observers. Even in cases where observers were reporting on the shortcoming of the IHEC, their representatives still actively participated in the event.

***Sustainability***

*10. What is current status of the programme / project components? Are functions and facilities still maintained? Who is responsible for the management of programme / project facilities after the project closure?*

This project did not have a component that directly addressed sustainability. As mentioned previously, the international community was not keen on funding domestic observers for 2009-2010 as it was felt that enough observers had already been trained. This opinion changed in the spring of 2009 and this project was ultimately submitted for fast-track review by the ITF in June 2009. At present, the issue of who will fund observers for future electoral events has yet to be determined. This project's original proposal mentioned that "...UNOPS/UNAMI have highlighted the need for alternative sources of funding to be sought in previous observers projects (and this one) but as of yet

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<sup>21</sup> There were no measurements as per this project's logical framework, although FES and ACHRS measured the level of knowledge as a part of their own training.

there is still no viable alternative.” While this was written in June 2009, interviews with all project stakeholders from both the UN and NGOs in March 2010 reveal that future funding is still an outstanding issue and no concrete solution has been determined to date.

However, while future funding of observers is unknown, it is expected that the effects of this project will be felt long after the conclusion of the electoral events of 2009-2010. As a result of this project (as well as past projects) there now exists a trained and experienced cadre of domestic observers in Iraq. These observers can be mobilized for future electoral events, or as is presently the case, utilized for elections in other countries such as Sudan. As mentioned by FES “Things are constantly changing in a new democracy such as Iraq, with new procedures and new electoral laws developed each year. Observers will continue to require refresher trainings for future electoral events (depending on the event itself and the procedures / politics surrounding it), but the main and most expensive part of the training has already been achieved.” ACHRS said “Regardless of funds from the UN or not – we will need to look for additional sources of funding, from the EU, or other donors. Even if there is no money, election monitoring will continue. We have really built professional teams of observers – with tens of thousands of observers now trained and experienced – now the teams need to move by themselves to find additional funds to operate.” Both agencies felt that any future observer projects will require a much smaller budget as the bulk of the training has already been conducted.

It is also important to note that UNOPS/UNAMI required the observers to conduct a number of observation activities on a voluntarily basis under this project (including pre and post balloting, special needs voting, and media black-out day), as well as decreased the mobilization fee per observers from past projects. These measures will contribute towards sustainability, as eventually observers should be conducting all activities on a voluntary basis (as is the case in countries that have more developed democratic institutions.) The fact that thousands of observers were mobilized to view events outside of Election Day itself, without payment or incentives, is a strong indication towards the sustainability of this project’s achievements.

Finally, as mentioned during project team interviews, external funding of domestic observers in Iraq was only designed as a temporary measure. The frequency of electoral events in Iraq will likely decrease in the next years<sup>22</sup>, and eventually funds for electoral observation should come from the operational budget of the GoI itself. The UN or other international funding source may also consider channeling future funds directly to the national NGO domestic observer networks, rather than go through international NGOs as was the case for the last five years. This will also contribute towards sustainability and operational independence for civil society organizations in Iraq in the longer-term.

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<sup>22</sup> Although there will likely be an election at the sub-district level, possible referendum in Kirkuk, and future VRUs, it is likely that the frequency of electoral events will decrease in comparison with the last two to three years.

## ***Lessons Learned***

### *11. What are the key lessons learned from programme / project implementation?*

- *Project activities resulted in effective electoral observation but also increased the engagement of more than 30,000 people in their country's political and social development:* The project aimed to ensure that there were adequate numbers of trained observers for the three electoral events of 2009-2010. With the conclusion of these events, an additional by-product of this project's implementation is that there is now a group of more than 30,000 people who are engaged and committed to their country's political and social development. This can be exemplified by the number of volunteers who participated in observation, the approximate \$25,000 contributed to the observer activities by the NGOs themselves, and the observation of events before the Iraq Parliament elections (including the media black out, special needs voting) at no additional cost. This not only shows a willingness to engage in Iraq's nascent democratic government in 2010, but also may have a positive impact on the relationship between civil society and the government in the future.
- *Even the best-designed project cannot account for last minute changes in electoral laws or procedures:* Elections laws, procedures, and politics were changed or delayed at various times throughout project implementation. This resulted in having to repeat the refresher training for the observers, which was a huge and unplanned for effort by FES / ACHRS. Although this is more of an observation rather than a direct lessons learned (as little can be done to predict such changes in the future), it is important to keep this in mind in terms of designing future elections projects in nascent democracies that are still determining how their electoral system will function.

### *12. Are there any specific recommendations to be considered when designing similar programme/ projects in the future?*

- *Build in time for a lessons learned exercise that includes all stakeholders:* In order to truly assess this project's successes, weaknesses, future plans and practical recommendations, it would be beneficial to build in the time and required budget for a lessons learned exercise that would include UNOPS, UNAMI, FES, ACHRS, representatives of the Iraqi NGOs who executed the observer activities, as well as actual observers who monitored to the electoral events. To date, UNOPS/UNAMI have relied upon progress and narrative reports to measure the impact of the electoral observers, but have yet to actually speak directly with observers.
- *Incorporate sustainability activities into the project workplan:* One of the main reasons that this project was fast-tracked for ITF approval was that after the fourth observer project, international donors stated they would no longer be interested in funding observer activities. The NGO partners involved were encouraged to seek other sources of funding for electoral observers, and by April 2009 it became clear that no other funds had been raised. Rather than jeopardize the observation of the three electoral events in 2009-2010, the IHEC Board of Commissioners requested funding assistance from the UN. Now that the three events have occurred, the NGOs



are back at the same point as the end of the fourth observer project. They have trained observers, set up observer networks and mechanisms in Iraq, but no future funding for actual observation has been secured. Given UNOPS/UNAMI's linkages with the UN, bilateral donors and other potential sources of funding, it would have been beneficial to incorporate actual activities on sustainability into the workplan, helping observer networks to secure longer term funding. In this regard, sustainability could have actually been part of the project work plan, with real results and accountability worked into the project design.

### ***Operational Effectiveness***

*13. How was the programme / project designed? Was any assessment undertaken to inform programming?*

This project was designed in order to ensure that the KRG elections (July 2009), VRU (August 2009) and Iraq Parliamentary elections (March 2010) had sufficient coverage by trained Iraqi electoral observers. This would help to ensure the electoral events and their results received appropriate the national and international recognition for being fair and transparent, which is critical for the advancement of democracy and good governance in Iraq. Although donors had previously stated that they would not fund a fifth observer project, UNOPS/UNAMI were approached in June 2009 to submit a proposal for events beginning in July.

Activities were designed based on an assessment of experiences and lessons learned from previous electoral observer projects conducted by UNOPS, UNAMI, FES and ACHRS (and NDI who were previously engaged in the supporting electoral observer networks and currently partner with ACHRS). As per the project proposal, the most significant lessons learned from past projects that were incorporated into the design include:

- Training content should continue to be based on international best-practice but also specifically on procedures/guidelines issued by the IHEC;
- UNAMI/Electoral Support Team to continue to serve as facilitator for communication between IHEC and electoral observer networks, in addition to direct contact between NGOs and IHEC both on the national and provincial level (e.g. for accreditation process and for observation results);
- Support to NGO networks to remain independent from IHEC (including transparent accreditation process);
- Coordination of coverage between various NGOs and NGO networks should continue to avoid overlap and 'white spots';
- Ultimate responsibility for coverage and quality of observation should continue to lie with the national electoral observer networks (including flexibility to manage last-minute changes by IHEC, such as delays, extensions, movement of polling centre locations, etc.);
- Good planning of IHEC electoral timelines to allow for sufficient training, accreditation, mobilization as well as funding for observer activities;
- NGOs' full accountability for financial expenditure and reporting (incl. supporting documents) and extensive validation process to clear payment requests

- (including spot-checks for supporting documents); Where possible, photocopies of IDs, Observer Accreditation documents should be received, matching disbursement of mobilization fee signatures;
- Where possible, continued monitoring of NGO training on the ground;
  - Encourage further election observation of media (this is outside the immediate scope of the project but considered valuable);
  - Improved coordination of activities for independent observer groups with relevant stakeholders (including donors, NGOs and the IHEC itself);
  - Improved targeting of areas in need of observation. These areas were identified through previous observer reports and through numbers of formal complaints received by the IHEC;
  - A reduction in dependence and funding of national electoral observer groups from international funding without compromising quality.

The project team should be commended for utilizing such comprehensive lessons learned from previous projects in the design of this fifth electoral observer proposal. This shows both analysis and progress from the last four electoral projects, as well as a genuine desire to improve project achievements. It is easy to cut and paste logical frameworks and activities from previous proposals, however this project clearly demonstrated scrutiny and a real desire to improve the implementation and outcomes of the interventions.

#### *14. Was the programme / project results framework clear, logical and focused?*

In general, the logical framework for this project was clear and focused, and was feasible given the short and intense timeframe for implementation. It followed a new template as provided by the ITF. One of the positive elements of this new template is that it linked the project activities with the NDS, ICI and other UN benchmarks for Iraq – which allows for clear demonstration (or not) as to how specific projects fit in with the overall national and UN strategies for Iraq. However, as the logframe followed this new template, there was no specific goal for the project. The highest aim that the project strove to reach was either the UNCT or Sector Outcome, and there were no indicators or other measurements to demonstrate if this project contributed towards the realization of these aims.

While project had two specific “outcomes” as the highest level that the activities would work towards (which the consultant assumes are “objectives” in generic monitoring and evaluation terms), these outcomes had no associated indicators or other pre-determined measurements. This makes it impossible to objectively measure if these results have been achieved.

The project’s outputs, which were the next level of the logframe, were clearly written, simple and concise, and allowed for the project team and the donor to know if they were achieved. The outputs had a number of quantitative indicators to demonstrate if activities were successful, and these appear to be most appropriate for this eight-month intensive project. It would have been useful to include at least one qualitative indicator to

complement this numerical data, such as knowledge change of the observers before and after their training.

*15. What systems were put in place to monitor programmes and projects? How well did they responded to UNOPS' and MDTF's reporting requirements? What have been the key challenges in monitoring and evaluation of the programme / project?*

#### *Monitoring Systems and Challenges*

The project was designed with a multi-layered monitoring system, which included reports from the local NGOs that partnered with FES and ACHRS, consolidation / analysis of data by FES and ACHRS, and then the review of the data / reports by UNOPS/UNAMI. From a design perspective, the monitoring system was well thought through, and had clearly been based on lessons learned from past projects.

As per the logical framework, the main sources of monitoring data for the project were reports from ACHRS and FES. Given the active role that UNOPS/UNAMI have with regards to support to the IHEC, actual monitoring of activities was directly conducted by FES and ACHRS in order to ensure there was no conflict of interest. The contracts with FES and ACHRS were very specific about what type of data should be provided to UNOPS/UNAMI and when, and in general, the monitoring of activities was conducted in a quality and efficient manner.

The extensive data provided to UNOPS/UNAMI from the project partners made it easy for ITF reports to be developed and there were few challenges with regards to monitoring project activities. As the bulk of activities were conducted in Iraq (which creates challenges for external monitoring / observation of activities), there is a great deal of trust placed with FES and ACHRS. However, this trust was based on successful past electoral observation projects and the strong working relationship between the project partners. Therefore the monitoring system appears to have been developed effectively and adequately met both UNOPS' and the ITF's requirements. The only main issue with the monitoring of activities is related to the reporting of indicators, which is described in further detail below.

#### *Reporting Requirements and Challenges*

Reporting of project activities was mainly the responsibility of FES and ACHRS, who provided reports to UNOPS/UNAMI after the training of observers and the observation of electoral events. UNAMI was responsible for reviewing the reports from FES and ACHRS from a technical perspective, with UNOPS approving reports and disbursing funds as appropriate after a satisfactory review from UNAMI. Given the previous relationship between all four partners, the mechanism to receive and review reports appeared to work quite well.

Overall, it appears that FES and ACHRS provided UNOPS/UNAMI with detailed and lengthy reports that provided quantitative information about observers, which sites they visited and when, but also provided qualitative analysis regarding the organization and implementation of the two electoral events observed to date. The reports from ACHRS

provided a great deal of detail about observation in specific sites, but lacked general analysis / recommendations regarding the electoral event. The reports from FES, a larger and more global organization, were quite comprehensive, providing analysis at both the micro and macro levels.

The only challenge identified is that the project only reported upon a select number of indicators in the quarterly reports to the ITF, or modified the indicator in the report from the original logframe. For example, output 1, which focused on enhancing the capacities of electoral observers had the following indicators as per the original logframe:

- Number of NGOs participating in the electoral observation process.
- Number of male and female electoral observers provided with full training on elections rules and regulations.
- Number of male and female electoral observers provided with refresher training as election observers.

However in the quarterly ITF report, the indicators that are used are:

- 5,000 electoral observers to be trained and 2,000 to be updated on electoral law prior the KRG elections
- 28,000 electoral observers to be updated on electoral law prior to the Iraq Parliamentary elections

This reporting is a combination of the original indicators combined with the expected result. While this change does not massively affect how this project is measured, it does mean that additional work is required to measure achievements as per the original logical framework. It would be recommended for the project to report upon its indicators as per the original logframe, both to examine progress made towards the overall goal, and to know if any modification has to be made to achieve the final result.

## **VI. Lessons and Generalizations**

The following are the five lessons learned that can be gleaned from this project's evaluation and applied on a broad scale. These points should be taken into consideration along with four points on lessons learned and good practice detailed in questions 11 and 12 to provide an overall illustration of i) what interventions or approaches have worked well for this project, ii) what should be replicated / capitalized on for future interventions in Iraq, and iii) generalizations on good practice for similar development programmes.

**Lesson 1: Evaluations of elections projects should only be scheduled after the completion of all activities; allowing time for implementation as well as reflection and analysis.**

As mentioned throughout this report, the final and most significant electoral activity for this project, the Iraq Parliamentary elections of March 7, 2010, occurred at the start of this evaluation. This means that all of the activities, results, and analysis about this major event have yet to be reported. In addition, many of the post-electoral activities will take at least three to six weeks from Election Day itself, and therefore cannot be considered under this evaluation. It is therefore recommended that future electoral projects only undergo an evaluation after at least two months have passed from the actual election. This will truly allow for genuine analysis and reflection on the entire electoral process / project, and be more conducive to the identification of lessons learned.

**Lesson 2: Partnerships between UN agencies with different technical mandates and areas of expertise are conducive to efficient programme management and implementation.**

The strength and effectiveness of the UNOPS and UNAMI partnership in this as well as the past electoral observation projects can be attributed to the concrete division of labour regarding technical and operational responsibilities. This was determined based on the specific organizational mandates of both agencies, using the strength of UNOPS' operational / administrative capacity together with the technical knowledge and expertise of the UNAMI elections team. Together this was a successful partnership, with each agency utilizing its skills to execute activities on time and in a quality manner. There are numerous other examples of UN partnerships between agencies that have similar technical mandates and have not been able to achieve such a high implementation rate. The UN should prioritize funding partnerships between its agencies where there is no clear technical overlap, and a division of both responsibility and mandate.

**Lesson 3: Projects should be required to report upon its entire logical framework, measuring results of all indicators as both the outcome/objective and output levels.**

Logical frameworks are critical tools for both the project team and the donor to i) monitor activities and measure successes, ii) examine changes in context, risks and the overall operating environment and iii) identify trends in programming and in the specific project itself. This project should have been reporting against its entire logical framework for the

entire duration of implementation, both for its own records as well as for the donor. This was not the case, and only a select number of indicators were measured in the quarterly reports. Although this was not massively detrimental to this particular project, it did mean that analysis on a number of indicators was not conducted. It should be a requirement under future trust fund or similar mechanisms for the implementing partner to report upon all levels of the original logical framework, not just selected outputs.

**Lesson 4: The UN should remain actively engaged in supporting electoral observation in Iraq (either through direct funds or advocacy with other donors / GoI) to ensure the neutrality and credibility of future electoral observation operations.**

Through the ITF, the UN has supported five electoral observer projects in Iraq over the last five years. Although the KRG elections, VRU, and Iraqi Parliamentary elections are now completed, it is likely that additional electoral events (i.e. sub-district council election, constitutional referendum, Kirkuk elections) will occur in the next 12-18 months. These events will require electoral observers to ensure fairness and transparency. At the present time, there is no further funding allocated for observers from the UN. In order to ensure that observers are neutral and not affiliated / beholden to any particularly group (political sectarian, ethnic etc.) it is necessary for the UN to help find additional funds, either through its own funding mechanisms, other bilateral donors, or through the GoI. It is possible that NGO networks involved in observation can access funds from political, sectarian or other groups in Iraq, but this will massively threaten the credibility and neutrality of these observers. This would be detrimental towards the significant progress made by this and past projects towards building a well-trained domestic observer network in Iraq, as well as more generally towards the advancement of democratic processes of Iraq. In order to ensure that i) there are adequate numbers of observers deployed for future electoral events in Iraq and ii) observers are as neutral as possible, it is recommended that the UN assist with fundraising efforts for future electoral observation activities.

**Lesson 5: Support to electoral observers can have a positive multiplier effect on both the country of focus as well as on a regional / global level.**

This project (along with the past electoral observer projects) has now resulted in an observer network in Iraq with tens of thousands of well-trained and experienced observers. This will obviously contribute to ensuring fairer and more credible electoral events in Iraq itself, but will also have a positive effect on electoral observation on a global scale, and particularly neighbouring / regional Arab countries. For example, observers from Iraq participated in the elections in Jordan in 2007, Lebanon in 2009, and are currently being mobilized to observe the upcoming elections in Sudan scheduled for April. In addition to having a team of qualified and experienced observers, there now exists a proven methodology of training, as well as skilled trainers who can easily adapt to the electoral procedures in other countries. Therefore this project's benefits will likely be felt far beyond Iraq's borders, particularly in neighbouring countries, which are (in some countries) slowly advancing towards democratization.

## Annex I: Logical Framework

<b>Programme Title:</b>	Support to National Electoral Observer Groups for the Electoral Events of Iraq 2009 - 2010						
<b>NDS/ICI priority/ goal(s):</b>	<u>NDS Goals</u> NDS: Strengthen good governance and improve security ICI: Section 3.1.2 Implementation of political / legislative timetable						
<b>UNCT Outcome</b>	Strengthened governance institutions and processes for political inclusion, accountability, rule of law and efficient service delivery.						
<b>Sector Outcome</b>	Governance Outcome 1: Strengthened electoral processes in Iraq (Output 1.3: Capacity of electoral and media observers strengthened)						
<b>(IP) Outcome 1</b>	Strengthened capacity of electoral observer networks in Iraq				<b>NDS / ICI Priorities:</b> NDS: Strengthen good governance and improve security ICI: Section 3.1.2 Implementation of political / legislative timetable		
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>UN Agency Specific Output</b>	<b>UN Agency</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Indicator target</b>
<u>Output 1.1</u> Enhanced capacities of electoral observers to manage the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	Enhanced capacities of electoral observers to manage the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	UNOPS; UNAMI	FES and ACHRS and their respective local NGO partners	Number of NGOs participating in the electoral observation process.  Number of male and female electoral observers provided with full training on elections rules and regulations.  Number of male and female electoral observers provided with refresher training as election observers.	Monitoring/ evaluation reports from ACHRS and FES; Accreditation information from IHEC	25 NGOs  30,000 electoral observers trained in 2008; 20 % female trainees.	25 NGOs  Total of 5,000 electoral observers trained and 30,000 updated on electoral law prior to the Kurdistan Elections and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections; min female trainees 20%

<b>(IP) Outcome 2</b>		Successful observation of electoral events in Iraq in 2009/2010					
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>UN Agency Specific Output</b>	<b>UN Agency</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Indicator target</b>
<u>Output 2.1</u> Civil society mobilized to fully participate in Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	Civil society mobilized to fully participate in Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections in a transparent manner.	UNOPS; UNAMI	FES and ACHRS and their respective local NGO partners	Number of electoral observers accredited for the for the observation of the Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections;  Number of electoral observers (male/female) mobilized for Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the Iraq Parliamentary Elections	Reports from NGO networks and ACHRS and FES; Election Day reporting from IHEC	0 electoral observers accredited for Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the CoR Elections  0 observers mobilized for KRG elections  0 observers mobilized for Voter Registration Update  0 observers mobilized for CoR elections	41,100 electoral observers accredited for Kurdistan Elections, the Voter Registration Update and the CoR Elections (At least 20% female observers accredited)  7,000 Observers mobilized for the Kurdistan Elections  4,900 Observers mobilized for the Voter Registration Update  29,200 Observers mobilized for the CoR Elections  At least 20% female observers mobilized



## **Annex II: List of Key Informant Interviews**

1. Niels Guenther, UNOPS, Deputy Director
2. Hakam Shawan, UNAMI EAT, Operations Coordinator
3. Achim Vogt, FES, Resident Director Jordan / Iraq
4. Mohammed A. Khalili, FES, Program Manager Jordan/Iraq
5. Dr. Nizam Assaf, ACHRS, Director

### **Annex III: Terms of Reference (TOR) for UNOPS ITF Programme Evaluations, January 2010**

This TOR is valid for the evaluation of the following ITF-funded UNOPS projects:

- Rehabilitation of Water Distribution Systems in Sidakan and Rawanduz
- Rehabilitation of Takia Water Distribution System
- Facilitating Reconciliation in Iraq through Constitutional Review and National Dialogue
- Institutional Development - Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IHEC Phase
- Support to Observers – Iraqi Election

**Purpose of evaluation:** The evaluations are expected to generate lessons that will feed into the proposed UNDG ITF lessons learned initiative for broader internal and external information sharing. It will also aid into designs of UNOPS future programme and similar engagements.

**Intent of the evaluation:** It is expected that the consultant will conduct *formative* project evaluations, examining the delivery of the programme, the quality of its implementation, and an assessment of the organizational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, etc.

**Evaluation Scope:** The consultant will conduct an evaluation of each of the three aforementioned projects, allotting no more than one month per project. Due to both time and travel constraints, the consultant will utilize project proposals, reports, and other project-collected information as well as key informant interviews (either in person or by phone) as the primary sources of data for the project evaluations. Based on time and UN ceiling space available, the consultant may also travel to Erbil to visit the water projects (due to the upcoming elections it is not feasible for the consultant to travel to Baghdad.)

**Evaluation Objectives:** As per the general ITF evaluation guidelines, the following objectives have been specifically customized for the UNOPS ITF project evaluations:

- **Development Results:** To assess the achieved progress and results against stipulated programme / project results and objectives on all stakeholders, especially beneficiary groups
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** To assess the efficiency of the programme / project interventions and understand the effectiveness of programme / project interventions in addressing the underlying problem(s)
- **Relevance:** To assess the relevance of programme/ project components in addressing the needs and issues of beneficiary groups
- **Partnership:** To understand the extent to which this programme / project has contributed to forging partnership at various levels with the Government of Iraq, Civil Society and UN/ donors
- **Lessons Learned:** To generate lessons on good practices based on assessment from the aforementioned evaluation objectives.

**Evaluation Questions:** The consultant should seek to address the following questions (as appropriate / relevant) when conducting the project evaluations:

**Development results**

1. What have been the specific benefits of the project to different beneficiary groups, including men, women, children, youth, and marginalized population groups?
2. How the project has contributed to national priorities as identified in the Iraq National Development Strategy (NDS), the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

**Efficiency and Effectiveness**

3. Has the programme/ project responded to the underlying development issues that provided rationale for the programme/ project? How?
4. How have programme / project results contributed to improved access and utilization of services?
5. How did the programme / project engage with stakeholders and beneficiaries during project planning and implementation?

**Relevance**

6. How did the programme/ project contribute to local / national needs and priorities?
7. How were project strategies tailored to the current programme / project context?

**Partnerships**

8. Has the programme/ project forged new partnerships / strengthened existing partnerships and how?
9. To what extent has the programme / project contributed to capacity development of the involved partners?

**Sustainability**

10. What is current status of the programme / project components? Are functions and facilities still maintained? Who is responsible for the management of programme / project facilities after the project closure?

**Lessons Learned**

11. What are the key lessons learned from programme / project implementation?
12. Are there any specific recommendations to be considered when designing similar programme/ projects in the future?

**Operational Effectiveness**

13. How was the programme / project designed? Was any assessment undertaken to inform programming?
14. Was the programme / project results framework clear, logical and focused?
15. What systems were put in place to monitor programmes and projects? How well did they responded to UNOPS' and MDTF's reporting requirements? What have been the key challenges in monitoring and evaluation of the programme / project?