# United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
## MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINALPROGRAMME[1] NARRATIVE REPORT
## REPORTING PERIOD: FROM *March 2010* TO *December 2012*

| **Programme Title & Project Number** | **Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results[2]** |
|---|---|
| • Programme Title: Assisting the Government of Iraq to Develop a National Tourism Strategy<br><br>   Programme Number *(if applicable)* C9-30<br>• MPTF Office Project Reference Number:[3] | *(if applicable)*<br>*Country/Region: Iraq*<br><br>*Priority area/ strategic results : Governance* |
| **Participating Organization(s)** | **Implementing Partners** |
| • UNESCO | • Iraqi Board of Tourism (Ministry of Culture- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities) |
| **Programme/Project Cost (US$)** | **Programme Duration** |
| Total approved budget as per project document:<br>MPTF /JP Contribution[4]:<br>USD 1,000,000<br>• *by Agency (if applicable)*<br>Agency Contribution<br>USD 250,000<br>• *by Agency (if applicable)* | Overall Duration *(months)*<br>Start Date[5] *(dd.mm.yyyy)*<br>1 March 2010<br><br>Original End Date[6] *(dd.mm.yyyy)*<br>26 April 2011 |
| Government Contribution<br>*(if applicable)*<br><br>Other Contributions (donors)<br>*(if applicable)* | Actual End date[7]*(dd.mm.yyyy)*<br>31 December 2012<br>Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system?    Yes ■   No ☐<br>Expected Financial Closure date[8]:<br>31 December 2013 |
| **TOTAL:** USD 1,000,000 | |
| **Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.** | **Report Submitted By** |
| Evaluation Completed<br>■ Yes ☐ No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*<br>Evaluation Report - Attached<br>■ Yes ☐ No Date: *31.12.2012* | o Name: Geraldine Chatelard<br>o Title: Culture Programme Specialist<br>o Participating Organization (Lead): UNESCO<br>o Email address: g.chatelard@unesco.org |

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[1] The term "programme" is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

[2] Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

[3] The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as "Project ID" on the project's factsheet page on the MPTF Office GATEWAY.

[4] The MPTF/JP Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see MPTF Office GATEWAY

[5] The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY

[6] As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

[7] If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. Please see MPTF Office Closure Guidelines.

[8] Financial Closure requires the return of unspent balances and submission of the Certified Final Financial Statement and Report.

**Guidelines:**

The Final Programme Report template is based on the UNDG 2003 template, which is currently under review and is in line with the UNDG Results Based Management Handbook (October 2011). The Final Programme Report should be provided after the completion of the activities in the approved programmatic document and provide information on the overall results of the programme including the final year of the activities.

Building on continued efforts made in the UN system to produce results-based reports, the report should demonstrate how the outputs collectively **contributed to the achievement of the agreed upon outcomes** of the applicable Strategic (UN) Planning Framework guiding the operations of the Fund.

In support of the individual programme reports, please attach any additional relevant information and photographs, assessments, evaluations and studies undertaken or published.

Where available, the information contained in the Programme Summaries, Quarterly and/or Semi-Annual Updates and Annual Progress Reports prepared by the Participating Organizations may be useful in the preparation of the Final Narrative Programme Report. These Summaries, Updates and Reports where applicable, are available in the respective Fund sections of the MPTF Office GATEWAY (http://mptf.undp.org/).

**Formatting Instructions:**

- The report should be between 10-15 pages. Include a list of the main abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report.
- Number all pages, sections and paragraphs as indicated below.
- Format the entire document using the following font: 12point _ Times New Roman and do not use colours.
- The report should be submitted in one single Word or PDF file.
- Annexes can be added to the report but need to be clearly referenced, using footnotes or endnotes within the body of the narrative.
- Do not change the Names and Numbers of the Sections below.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The project resulted in the elaboration of a *National Strategic Framework for Tourism*, with a focus on institutional development for the newly legalized Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, a *Tourism Development Plans* for *Najaf*, and a *Tourism Development Plan for Babel.* All documents were elaborated based on consultations with government officials and private sector businesspeople. They were officially endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The main items in their Action Plans were incorporated in the *National Development Strategy of Iraq* for 2014-2018.

## I.  Purpose

Pillar 1 of the National Development Strategy of Iraq (2007 – 2010) sought to strengthen the foundations of economic growth through a variety of means including providing a greater role for tourism. Considering the potential impact of the tourist industry, UNESCO decided to assist the Government of Iraq in preparing a National Tourism Strategy. The main objective of the project was to strengthen capacities of relevant Government Institutions, in particular of the State Board of Tourism, for the strategic planning of tourism sector and for promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism. Development of a comprehensive tourism strategy for Iraq covered different aspect of the tourist industry. Moreover, it identified potential tourism products for cultural, religious and eco-tourism and suggested ways of developing the sector at a short-, mid- and long-terms.

The project was expected to meet the following set of objectives states in the National Development Strategy of Iraq: (5.3) strengthening economic growth through tourism; (7.1) human development; (9.40 strengthening institutions and improving governance.

As regards UNDAF Iraq Framework (2011-2014), the responded to the following priority areas:
2.1.1 Improved Governance and Human Rights
2.1.2 Inclusive and More Equitable Economic Growth
2.1.5 Investment in Human Capital

The project outcome was to strengthen regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance.

## II. Assessment of Programme Results

The initial project design identified as the main outcome: strengthened regulatory frameworks, an enhanced institutional performance, and an improved tourism policy formulation, both nationally and locally. Two result areas were formulated in this regard, namely that the Government of Iraq has improved capacities to develop the tourism sector (Output 1.1.) and that the Government of Iraq is better able to promote cultural, religious and eco-tourism (Output 1.2.). Both outputs relied on capacity building activities that were sequenced in line with the basic idea that it would be the Iraqi officials who would ultimately elaborate strategies and development plans, in addition to creating tools (virtual tours, tour guides, tour guide licensing) in view of promoting cultural, religious, and eco-tourism in Iraq.

Original outputs as per the Project Document were:

Output 1: Capacity Development
1.   Assessment of capacity and operational needs of the Tourism Board

2. Development of an institutional capacity building programme for concerned stakeholders based on the findings of the above-mentioned Assessment;
3. Three training sessions conducted to enhance the tourism sector;
4. Organization of study tours in the region targeting three case studies: cultural tourism for world heritage site, religious tourism and eco-tourism;
5. Strengthening of the coordination mechanism among tourism sector stakeholders;
6. Draft of Tourism Strategy presented and endorsed during a National Conference in Baghdad.

Output 2: Support for the creation of tools for the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism in Iraq.
1. Development of Virtual Tours
2. Support to the development of Tourism Guide Licensing System

In terms of outputs, on Output 1 (capacity development) and its various components were achieved, whereas Output 2 (support for the creation of tools for the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism in Iraq) has to be abandoned in the course of the project implementation for lack of engagement and preparedness of the Iraqi partner. The main outputs of the programme were: a *National Strategic Framework for Tourism* focusing on central government level institutions, a *Tourism Development Plans* for *Najaf* and a *Babel Tourism Development Plan*. All documents were elaborated based on consultations with government officials and private sector businesspeople, and were endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The main items in their Action Plans were incorporated in the *National Development Strategy of Iraq* for 2014-2018.

In terms of outcomes, it is assumed that the work on the National Strategic Framework as well as the Najaf and Babel Tourism Development Plans will feed into change processes within Iraqi public administration by delivering best practice examples to MoTA and the Tourism Board specifically of how to draft local level tourism development plans.

The project implementation commenced on 27 April 2010 with activities designed to ultimately strengthen regulatory frameworks, enhance the performance of institutions, and improve the formulation of tourism policies both nationally and locally. The project was supposed to be achieved within twelve months, i.e. by 27 April 2011.

However, given unclear competencies in the tourism sector and institutional rivalries between the Ministry of Culture and the State Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, changes in personnel, an unstable security situation, and lack of perseverance on behalf of the GoI, activities did not unfold as planned. During the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2010, preparation were made for a kick-off meeting An Italian tourism expert was seconded by the Italian government to Baghdad, where he performed data gathering for an assessment of the Capacity and Operational Needs of the Tourism Board, and delivered training of staff for tourism development. However, the kick-off meeting could not take place and the execution of the project was delayed. A one year no-cost extension was requested and granted until 27 April 2012, leaving the basic design of the outputs and their sequencing unchanged.

The inception (or kick-off meeting) for 20 Iraqi government officials finally took place in Amman, Jordan on 7 June 2011, preceded by a study tour the day before to familiarize decision takers with the Jordanian experience in the promotion of cultural, religious and eco-tourism sites. During the deliberations in Amman, UNESCO brought in international tourism consultants to discuss planning priorities and an updated strategy for project implementation. Following further consultations between UNESCO and the Tourism Board in November and December 2011, it was decided to make up for the incurred delays by hiring an international project-supporting contractor and by revising the initial schedule of activities and implementation modalities. As a result, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was launched in view of (a) enhancing the capacities

of a National Drafting Team throughout the preparation of the National Tourism Strategy; (b) preparing a Tourism Development Plan for the site of Babylon; (c) preparing a Tourism Management Plan for the city of Najaf; and (d) contributing actively to the organization of the National Conference on Tourism to be co-hosted by UNESCO and the Government of Iraq. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were released with the RfP on 26 January 2012, with a deadline for final submissions in sealed proposals set for 20 February 2012. During this process, a second extension of the project until 31 December 2012 was prepared by UNESCO and finally approved by UNDG ITF in May 2012.

In the meantime, the legal framework of the tourism sector in Iraq had been rationalized with the promulgation of Law Number 13 of 2012 that granted full legal status to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and established oversight over the Tourism Board (as well as the Antiquities and Heritage Board), upgrading the ministry from the incumbent and inferior type of State Ministry. Although functional discrepancies continued with regard to both entities covered by the law (i.e. the Tourism Board and the Antiquities and Heritage Board), it proved to be a turning point in terms of MoTA's capacity to fully engage with the project. UNESCO had, as outlined in the preceding paragraph, just changed its project approach to bring in international consultants in order to avoid a further loss of time. Negotiations between UNESCO and the bidders took place in April 2012, leading to an agreement signed with the contractor, ProCare Services de Consultations, on 9 July 2012.

This mobilization of outside expertise came along with substantial changes in the schedule of activities, leading over the following months to the identification of three key outputs (namely a National Strategic Framework, and Tourism Development Plans for both Najaf and Babel). Instead of describing results to be attained by the GoI with support by UNESCO, these outputs turned into deliverables to be achieved by the contractor by closely involving Iraqi governmental and private sector stakeholders. While the original design of 2010 relied on more generic capacity building approaches (Output 1.1.) as well as training modules for virtual tours and tourism guides (Output 1.2.), the revised plan of 2012 foresaw a pragmatic and hands-on approach. The new rationale was to produce high quality inputs to future tourism development work by ways of example. This represented a more inductive rather than deductive method of developing competencies among Iraqi tourism stakeholders.

An Inception Report was submitted by ProCare Services de Consultations within days of signing the contract with UNESCO. In July 2012, the contractor conducted meetings with Iraqi stakeholders in Baghdad, most importantly with senior officials and other staff of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), and its two boards, the Antiquities and Heritage Board (AHB), and the Tourism Board (TB). During these consultations, the focus of attention was on (a) institutional development of public authorities in charge of tourism; (b) human resources development; and (c) private hospitality sector development. As a cross-cutting issue, the complex legal situation was listed in detail and summarized in terms of most salient features in the Initial Stakeholder Meeting Report presented to UNESCO in August 2013.

The following months witnessed the elaboration of Tourism Development Plans for Najaf (with a first draft submitted to UNESCO in November 2012), followed by a parallel exercise on Babel (in December 2012), as well as by an initial framework study on tourism in Iraq focusing on central government level institutions (January 2013). All documents were elaborated based on consultations with government officials and private sector businesspeople during field visits to Iraq, by attending the London World Travel Market in November 2012 as well as by exchanging information and ideas remotely. The results were shared and discussed with Iraqi officials and private tourism sector representatives at a Stakeholder Revision Workshop in Amman, Jordan on 20 to 21 February 2013, during which the Head of the Board of Tourism, officially mandated by the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, endorsed the three planning documents on behalf of the Ministry. Following this meeting, these studies were updated and enriched by a first volume on project preambles, context, and proceedings as of 10 March 2013, prior to the final financial closure of the project on 31 March 2013. It is expected that the material be presented during spring 2013 in similar workshops in Iraq under the auspices of MoTA, possibly with Najaf as the venue of a first such stakeholder consultation.

Under the specific institutional conditions encountered during Phase I (from April 2010 to early 2012, that is before the legalization of the MoTA), the initial project design was undermined in its effectiveness. This was due to the contradictory administrative competencies under which in particular the Tourism Board had to operate. The lack of operational counterpart ownership created a situation of repeated delays and project extensions. Even though the legal framework was finally put in place, the upgraded status of MoTA did not put an end to all dysfunctional phenomena. These continued to include institutional rivalry, a politically charged atmosphere coupled with sectarian distrust that translated into the malfunctioning of government entities. In addition, it appears that increasing professionalism of staff could not even be remotely initiated in a situation where public administration was turned into an employment machine, providing jobs for people as an expression of social rather than of professional concerns. As a result, the planned benefits (in terms of capacity building activities) were only delivered in a selective way during Phase I. While some intended target audiences (in particular within the Tourism Board and some private sector companies) did participate in the intervention, it was the patchy character of project implementation that ultimately weakened effectiveness. During Phase I, there was therefore no change in behavioral patterns that are typically expected in institutional reform projects. What did occur was, following the adoption of Law Number 13 of 2012, a slow attempt at aligning the actual institutional arrangements and characteristics with the ones foreseen in the law.

UNESCO was fully aware of these issues that hampered the effectiveness of the project; it was not that activities were conducted but did not yield results and impact, but that the implementation per se was stalled, not allowing for much to happen. The distinct Phase II that commenced with the hiring of international consultants during January to July 2012 reflected this growing awareness, coupled with the urgent sense that showing patience until things were sorted out within the Government of Iraq would have led to witnessing the total disintegration of the project. The approach to inject massive and coherent expertise in view of producing deliverables rather than to rely on intermittent capacity building constituted a return from the institutional development approach back to the concept of sector development. UNESCO realized that the institutional setup of MoTA may have been clarified in legal terms with the promulgation of Law Number 13 of 2012, but that at least in actual and socio-political terms a need for disentangling and streamlining responsibilities persisted. For an institutional development approach, a clear understanding would have been needed on how public administration (MoTA) works or would be expected to work. This applies to the strategic orientation on whether an institution like the Tourism Board is conceived rather as a regulator or as a provider of tourism services. It also relates to the question on how centralized or decentralized tourism development and administration are supposed to become. Furthermore, it implies the question regarding the scope and type of privatization that the Government of Iraq may want to implement in the incumbent structure. – Since these and other issues (staffing, human resources) were not clarified to provide a sound basis, the sector development approach was adopted as an alternative.

## ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWPs** - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

| | **Achieved Indicator Targets** | **Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)** | **Source of Verification** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome 1**[9] Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes of national and local governance<br>**Indicator: NA**<br>**Baseline: NA**<br>**Planned Target: NA** | | | |
| **Output 1** GOI has improved capacities to develop the tourism sector<br><br>**Indicator 1.1** Assessment of the capacity and operational needs of the Iraqi tourism board completed<br>**Baseline: NO**<br>**Planned Target: 1** | 100% | | Assessment Report |
| **Indicator 1.2** No. of government staff trained on strategic planning (gender disaggregated)<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 50** | 75% | | Training and workshop attendance sheets |
| **Indicator 1.3** % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and usefulness<br>**Baseline: NA**<br>**Planned Target: 80%** | 100% | | Post-training and workshops assessments |
| **Indicator 1.4** Number of staff participating in study tours on planning and management cultural, religious, and ecotourism<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 30** | 95% | | Reports and attendance sheets |

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[9] Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlines in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicator 1.5** A tourism strategy is drafted<br>**Baseline: No**<br>**Planned Target: 1** | 300% | Three strategic planning documents were developed (National, Najaf, and Babel) | The strategy documents |
| **Indicator 1.6** Number of Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Religious Affairs staff training in data collection of religious and eco -tourism sites<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 20** | 100% | | Training reports |
| **Indicator 1.1.7** % of trainees satisfied with the quality of training in terms relevance and usefulness **Baseline: NA**<br>**Planned Target: 80%** | 100% | | Post-training assessment |
| **Output 2** GOI is better able to promote cultural, religious and eco -tourism<br><br>**Indicator 2.1** Number of young architects, archaeologists, web designers trained on virtual tour design<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 15** | 20% | Trainees identified by training not performed as MoTA did not accept activity | List of potential trainees |
| **Indicator 2.2** Number of sample Virtual Tours on archaeological sites, religious shrines, and eco tourism sites developed<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 6** | 30% | Company identified through expression of interest but training not performed as per the above | Selection memo of company |
| **Indicator 2.3** Number of training centers identified for tourism guides in cultural, religious and ecotourism identified<br>**Baseline: 0**<br>**Planned Target: 5** | 100% | | Report and list of centers |

### iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned
- Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken relating to the programme and how they were used during implementation. Has there been a final project evaluation and what are the key findings? Provide reasons if no programme evaluation have been done yet?
- Explain challenges such as delays in programme implementation, and the nature of the constraints such as management arrangements, human resources etc. What actions were taken to mitigate these challenges? How did such challenges and actions impact on the overall achievement of results? Have any of the risks identified during the project design materialized or were there unidentified risks that came up?
- Report key lessons learned and best practices that would facilitate future programme design and implementation, including issues related to management arrangements, human resources, resources, etc. <u>Please also include experiences of failure, which often are the richest source of lessons learned.</u>

A final programme evaluation was conducted and concluded that:

While the GoI correctly identified tourism as a promising economic sector and hence partnered with UNESCO in design and implementation of the project, it appeared unable or unwilling to make the necessary legal, administrative, and personnel adjustments *in time* to actually translate a policy idea into a coherent strategy linked to realistic actions plans in its different pillars. Awareness appears to have increased, and first steps towards responding to the situation have been taken, though not necessarily irreversibly.

UNESCO administered the project in the best approaches of institutional development and opted to shift to sector development when it became apparent that the existing setup on the Iraqi side did not comply with what the GoI had subscribed to in its understanding with UNESCO and UNDG ITF. This reversal was not conducted hastily but performed in a well-studied way with UNESCO and the donor agency willing to make substantial no-cost changes to the resources employed in the project. The results show that truly foundational work can be achieved by focusing on sector-related issues (what is the situation; what is to be done) rather than on public sector actors. As the case of Najaf illustrates, tourism can even flourish without much government interference.

The concrete implementation obstacles of the tourism development project in Iraq originated in an area that was not identified in the risk analysis nor addressed in the lessons learnt from previous programs. The problems were dealt with swiftly by UNESCO, not necessarily in terms of time (where repeated recovery attempts were legitimate) but definitely in terms of reallocating resources to a new implementation approach that started as a kind of rescue attempt but turned out to be at least as meaningful and relevant as the initial project design would have been under normal circumstances.

### iv) A Specific Story (Optional)
- This could be a success or human story. <u>It does not have to be a success story – often the most interesting and useful lessons learned are from experiences that have not worked</u>. The point is to highlight a concrete example with a story that has been important to your Programme.
- In ¼ to ½ a page, provide details on a specific achievement or lesson learned of the Programme. Attachment of supporting documents, including photos with captions, news items etc, is strongly encouraged. The MPTF Office will select stories and photos to feature in the Consolidated Annual Report, the GATEWAY and the MPTF Office Newsletter.

**Problem / Challenge faced:** Describe the specific problem or challenge faced by the subject of your story (this could be a problem experienced by an individual, community or government).

**Programme Interventions:** How was the problem or challenged addressed through the Programme interventions?

**Result (if applicable):** Describe the observable *change* that occurred so far as a result of the Programme interventions. For example, how did community lives change or how was the government better able to deal with the initial problem?

**Lessons Learned:** What did you (and/or other partners) learn from this situation that has helped inform and/or improve Programme (or other) interventions?