United Nations Development Group UNDAF Trust Fund
Project #:81967: P1-01
Quarter Updated: 1 January-31 March 2014
1st Quarter 2014

Participating UN Organisation: UNDP Lead and UNOPS

PWG: Governance & Human Rights

UNDP Project 81917

Government of Iraq – Responsible Line Ministry: **CSO Committee of the Council of Representatives**

Title	Empowering CSOs in Iraq
Geographic Location	Nationwide for the capacity building of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under UNDP. The KRG Compact work under UNOPS is only for KRG.
Project Cost	Total Cost USD 3,237,419 **USD 2,221,818 from UNDAF Trust Fund for UNDP component** USD 1,015,601 from DANIDA, for UNOPS component (please refer to note below)
Duration	18 months
Approval Date (SC)	18th January 2012	**Starting Date**	12th March 2012	**Completion Date**	12 Sep 2013, extended to 30th June 2014
Project Description	UNDP and UNOPS will support Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to effectively monitor Government's compliance with due process and transparency. UNDP through UNDAF Trust Fund will build the capacity of chosen CSOs to hold the Government accountable in the areas of Service Delivery, Corruption, Human Rights and Civil Rights. Through encouraging CSOs to form consortia the project will transfer know-how whilst working on concrete issues. The Project will contribute to opening up permanent and sustainable channels between CSOs and Government to interface and advocate that the voices of civil society are heard and taken into account in relation to public policymaking. The partnership with UNOPS will build on existing strong relationships with the KRG, Kurdistan Parliament and Kurdistan Region civil society.

Note: This project is composed of two separate components. The UNDP component, Output 2 is funded under the UNDAF Trust Fund. The UNOPS component, Output 1 is bilaterally funded by DANIDA to UNOPS and respectively UNOPS will report directly to DANIDA. **This report therefore covers the UNDP portion Output 2 of the Project Document.**

Development Goal and Immediate Objectives

UNDAF Outcome 1.1: The Iraqi state has a more inclusive and participatory political process reflecting improved national dialogue.

The Project contributes to the following **UNDAF priority areas**:
- ➢ Priority 1: Improved governance, including protection of human rights.
- ➢ Priority 4: Increased access to quality essential services.
- ➢ Priority 5: Investment in human capital and empowerment of women, youth and children.

The Project contributes to **UNDP Iraq's Country Programme Outcome 1:** Enhanced rule of law, protection and respect for human rights in line with international standards.

The project is being implemented in full alignment with work being done by other UN agencies as well as the Human Rights Office.

Outputs, Key activities and Procurement

Outputs	Output 1: Government is supported to facilitate free engagement of CSOs in development and reconciliation processes. *UNOPS reports bilaterally to DANIDA on this component.* **Output 2: CSOs have an enhanced capacity to promote citizen oversight mechanisms.** *UNDP component*
Output	**Activities**
Output 2: **CSOs have an** **enhanced** **capacity to** **promote citizen** **oversight** **mechanisms**	**UNDP Component: Output 2 which is reflected in this report** 2.1 CSO Mapping 2.2 Preparatory Workshop with CSOs on the Call for Proposals process 2.3 Drafting of Calls for Proposals Guidelines 2.4 Establishing the Evaluation Committee 2.5 Eligibility check of applicants 2.6 Evaluation of Concept notes 2.7 Discussion with successful applicants for the development of the full proposal 2.8 Evaluation of full proposals 2.9 Contract negotiation and contracting 2.10 Establish an online community of practice 2.11 Arrange for Community of practice live workshop half way through project cycle. 2.12 Monitoring and Evaluation 2.13 Programme Evaluation
Output 1: Government is supported to facilitate free engagement of CSOs in development and reconciliation processes.	Bilaterally reported to DANIDA **UNOPS Component: Output 1** 1.1 Conduct awareness activities targeting representatives of public authorities and civil society 1.2 Drafting of the base policy Compact document by technical experts at the start of the programme 1.3 Planning/strategy meeting between representatives of the KRG authorities and civil society 1.4 Papers prepared and disseminated among various stakeholders on the relevant topic and how they can relate to the situation in Iraq 1.5 Study tour takes place 1.6 Conduct training of trainers for civil society activists and representatives of the KRG parliaments and subsequent cascade trainings 1.7 Consultations of the draft document among civil society organizations in the KRG Iraq carried out through meetings and media. 1.8 Conduct consultations of the draft document between representatives of Civil Society and KRG parliament 1.9 Adoption of the policy agreement between the KRG parliament and civil society 1.10 Final conference announcing adoption of the document, preferably organized at the KRG parliament
Procurement **(major items)**	• Technical support entities • Trainers and facilitators • CSO grants (for non-credit related activities)

Funds Committed		USD 2,015,947	**% of approved budget (100% of funds received)**	91%
	* The commitment calculation formula has been adjusted this quarter to reflect a better project commitment reality. This figure includes all PO expenditure incurred, all committed CSO grants paid and due, salaries of all staff paid and due, open contracts with consultancy companies paid and due, the total GMS for the funds received and other open commitments for the project covering the whole			

	implementation period.		
Funds Disbursed	USD 1,541,506	**% of approved budget (100% of funds received)**	69%
Forecast final date	December 2014	**Delay (months)**	6

No-cost extension request: A request has been submitted in April to the Iraq UNDAF Trust Fund Steering Committee for an extension until 31 December 2014. The overall implementation of the project is progress well with good achievements, however the timeline of the project has been affected by the escalation of violence within Iraq since 2013. The extension will provide sufficient time to respond to the demand of the NGO Directorate for technical assistance based on the experience of this project to help them establish their own NGO grants mechanism and tools. This will be a very positive way for the project to phase out in a sustainable way. This will lead to exceeding the objectives initially set by the project.

The proposed extension takes into consideration the fact that the upcoming elections of late April are putting certain activities on hold due to the sensitivities and shift of priorities related to some of the sensitive issues addressed by this project. In addition, the uncertainty as to what the post-election political and security scenario will be justifies a conservative estimate for a completion of the project by 31 December 2014.

Quantitative achievements against objectives and results

Output 2: CSOs have an enhanced capacity to promote citizen oversight mechanisms.	2.1 CSO Capacity Mapping	**% of planned**	100%
	2.2 Preparatory Workshop with CSOs on the Call for Proposals process		100%
	2.3 Drafting of Calls for Proposals Guidelines		100%
	2.4 Establishing the Evaluation Committee		100%
	2.5 Eligibility check of applicants		100%
	2.6 Evaluation of Concept notes		100%
	2.7 Discussion with successful applicants for the development of the full proposal		100%
	2.8 Evaluation of full proposals		100%
	2.9 Contract negotiation and contracting		100%
	2.10 Establish an online community of practice		50%
	2.11 Arrange for Community of practice live workshop half way through project cycle.		100%
	2.12 Monitoring and Evaluation		75%

Qualitative achievements against objectives and results

UNDP UNDAF Trust Fund component

Output 2: CSOs have an enhanced capacity to promote citizen oversight mechanisms.

8 CSO Consortia project implementation and networking with Council of Representatives
- Eight grantee CSO Consortia (comprised of 31 local CSOs) have been implementing eight projects aimed at holding the government to account in the areas of human rights, corruption and service delivery since May 2013. The projects are now near completion with 11 out of 12 months completed, with good progress achieved. The implementation of the eight projects has been accompanied by technical support for capacity development to the CSOs. Projects cover most Governorates of Iraq and relate mostly to enhancing accountability on local services, through citizen participation and networking between CSOs and local

authorities. Other projects include, raising awareness on human rights, particularly minority rights and promoting better governance through enhanced women participation in the public sphere (see annexed project summaries for more details). Overall, implementation is progressing well although some CSO Consortia are being followed up closely to address some implementation delays. At the time of writing this report the third quarter progress reports from the CSOs where being reviewed together with the CSOs to help improve their reporting skills, an update on the CSO project implementation will be included in the next report. Final reports by the 8 CSO consortia are due in June 2014 and an account of key achievements will be included in the 3rd quarter report of this project.

- UNDP continued promoting networking and linkages between CSOs and the Parliament. Notably a second CSO Peer Knowledge Exchange Workshop took place in Erbil in February allowing for networking between CSOs and these institutions, as well as some representatives of Local Governments. The Parliament committee on CSOs and the NGO Directorate have expressed their interest in UNDP's NGO grant mechanism, as a good practice model on which to base the potential federal budget level NGO grant mechanism. UNDP has initiated discussions with the NGO Directorate to provide institutional development technical support in the second half of 2014. The support will be two fold: First, assistance in capturing the CSO granting model experience and lessons learned as a final step of this project in order to ensure an essential step to a sustainable handover to the NGO Directorate. This initiative goes in pair with the fact that the NGO Directorate is supporting a draft law proposal for government funded CSO Grants that is currently with the Shura Council. Given the short term remaining for the current Parliament term it is unlikely to be approved but equipping the NGO Directorate with CSO granting tools will allow them to quick start the grants as soon as the law passes probably early 2015. The second facet of the technical support to the NGO Directorate is envisaged with SIDA funding to support their recent initiative to create a CSO Capacity Development Unit. The UNDP CSO capacity development experience of recent years with DANIDA and SIDA support will then be capitalized on by supporting the activation and reinforcement of this Unit over the second half of 2014 and 2015. This continued support will ensure this project achieves results beyond expectations and really creates a sustainable improvement of the enabling environment for CSO and their relations with public authorities.

CSO Capacity Development
- The consultant teams have continued supporting CSO consortia against their established individual capacity profiles with regular field visits and demand-based online coaching on specific topics. All training support has been complemented by follow up field visits and online support meetings.

- In February, a thematic group working session took place in Erbil to discuss how CSOs approached Donor Relations. These interactive sessions focused on understanding different entry points to approach donors, how to present project ideas and the different approaches of the most common donors when dealing with NGOs in Iraq.

- CSOs also received extensive report writing support and coaching as their third quarterly reports were due in March 2014. CSOs were also given the opportunity to review their draft reports based on direct feedback. This process will be repeated again for the final reporting exercise with the aim of significantly improving CSO's reporting skills by the end of the project.

Monitoring CSO Projects
- The CSO projects monitoring strategy has been developed to ensure tracking of progress against the following: progress in CSO project implementation and project results; and progress in terms of institutional CSO capacity development. The third quarter reports for the eight CSO projects, including progress implementation details from 1 November to 31 January 2013 were due in March 2014. UNDP provided technical support through its consultant teams giving the CSOs an opportunity to enhance their draft reports based on practical feedback. The reporting quality has been steadily improving up to this third round of

reports, although some CSOs still struggle to focus on qualitative achievements.

- Overall, implementation is progressing well although some the projects show delays against the established work plan and UNDP is following up closely to ensure continuous progress. Given the practical and security constraints of working in Iraq the fact that all CSOs are effectively working on their activities is a significant achievement. At the time of reporting the third quarter reports of the CSO consortia where being reviewed, an account of progress achieved will be provided in the next of this project.

Knowledge Management

- A second CSO Peer Knowledge Exchange Workshop took place in February in Erbil with over 40 local CSO representatives and the contributions of key partner institutions such as the CSO parliamentary Committee, both from the Federal and Kurdish Parliaments, the NGO directorate from Baghdad and Erbil and representatives of a sample of local governments that are interacting with the CSOs of this project. The discussion focused on allowing interaction between the CSOs and these institutions allowing to increase the mutual understanding of roles and challenges faced by each party. Monitoring progress and results though evidence is a challenge for CSOs and this topic was covered during the second day. The last day focused on CSOs sharing various good practice examples with their peers and ensuring horizontal learning among peers. Further details of the accomplishments of this event can be found in Annex 3.

- The LinkedIn online community of practice was launched in July and has reached membership of 40 CSO participants. The main goal is to create a facilitated web-based peer-knowledge sharing mechanism, in which CSOs can share their experiences, challenges, and problem-solving skills with each other. A few initial discussions and consultations have already taken place on LinkedIn, but it is usage levels by CSOs are not as high as expected despite several initiatives to facilitate and promote its use. This has been a challenge for the project. The interface combining English and Arabic script combined with the lack of technical skills by some CSO senior staff seemed to be what was creating this bottleneck. UNDP took action through a dedicate training manual and coaching session with each CSO consortia to ensure no technicalities where hampering the use of Linked In. Unfortunately the use of Linked In has still not reached the levels expected despite the fact that 45% of the CSOs involved express being satisfied with LinkedIn. During the CSO Peer Knowledge Exchange Workshop CSOs have proposed to run a parallel Facebook group that will ensure an easier networking, albeit less professional, between CSOs. The Facebook group is now active and CSOs have started contributing to it.

Project Board

- The second Project Board for this project took place in March 2013. The Project Board covered both UNDP and UNOPS civil society projects, demonstrating the high levels of coordination and joint work of these two UN agencies. Representatives of the CSO parliamentary Committee both in Baghdad and Erbil, the NGO Directorate, Civil Society, Senior managers from UNDP and UNOPS as well as the project teams where present. From the Donor side, the EU attended the meeting as it is funding UNOPS, DANIDA and SIDA (invited as an observer) were not available to attend the meeting. UNDP presented the progress of this project and UNOPS covered the activities under its Kurdistan CSO Compact and Federal level CSO Charter. The Project Board provided very positive general feedback and recommendations on the implementation progress and approved the Annual Work Plan for 2014. Government and Parliament counterparts appreciated the high levels of engagement they have been given in these projects and the civil society representative noted that more NGOs should be invited to the Project Board event and other project management key moments to ensure a meaningful contribution of NGOs.

Main implementation constraints & challenges

The project faces implementation constraints and challenges related to the security environment in Iraq. Different security incidents and the overall security situation regularly create challenges for CSO participants to attend trainings and other project activities. The upcoming elections have been escalating the situation progressively and this is expected to continue until the end of April when these will take place. It is undertrain what the post-election scenario will be and how it will affect the activities of this component. The security in the Baghdad area is deteriorating rapidly due to the situation in Anbar province, making it difficult to ensure high attendance to project events from CSO travelling from other governorates. For this reason most project activities have been organized in Erbil. Accessing Erbil has become challenging in the past months for CSOs travelling by road form other areas, as the access road from the south has been the target of attacks and the check points to access the Erbil area require a preliminary notification to the Kurdish security authorities to ensure entrance for the CSOs. This also affects the capacity of CSO consortia to ensure internal coordination meetings as often as they wish as well as the level of attendance of individual community members to their activities. Despite this challenge, it is worth noting that CSO participants and communities in general have been showing a great level of commitment and have been attending project activities better than expected by the Project Management.

Coordination with the CSO parliamentary Committee has been slowed in this quarter due to the approaching end of the parliamentary term and the prospect of the elections in April having shifted priorities and increased workload for members of parliament. Despite this constraint, the cooperation with the CSO Committee is going well and has been fruitful so far.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of 8 CSO consortia (31 CSOs) selected for project grants and capacity development

CSO Name	Role	CSO Code	Governorate
Insan Iraqi Society for Relief and Development	Lead	CSO1	Kirkuk
National Institute for Human Rights	Member	CSO1.1	Kirkuk
Humanitarian Relief Association for Iraqi Turkmen Women	Member	CSO1.2	Kirkuk
Iraqi Institute for Development (IID)	Lead	CSO2	Mosul
Organization of Iraqi Family	Member	CSO2.1	Tikreet
Harraa Humanitarian Organization	Member	CSO2.2	Diyala
Kurdistan Reconstruction and Development Organization (KURDO)	Lead	CSO3	Sulaymaniyah
Youth Activity Organization (YAO)	Member	CSO3.1	Sulaymaniyah

Kurdistan Economic Development Organization (KEDO)	Member	CSO3.2	Sulaymaniyah	
Al Khair Organization	Lead	CSO4	Missan	
Al Ahrar Organization	Member	CSO4.1	Missan	
Iraqi women Foundation	Member	CSO4.2	Missan	
Al Amel Association	Member	CSO4.3	Missan	
Journalists Youth Organization	Member	CSO4.4	Missan	
Al Rafidain Women Organization	Lead	CSO5	Muthanna	
Al Huda Institution for Strategic Studies	Member	CSO5.1	Missan	
Al-Ekha'a Organization for Democracy and Peace	Member	CSO5.2	Basra	
Iraq Flower for Democratic Organization	Member	CSO5.3	Thi Qar	
Salam Al Rafidain Organization	Lead	CSO6	Baghdad	
Al Mahaba Forum	Member	CSO6.2	Anbar	
Association for Woman And Children	Member	CSO6.1	Baghdad	
Bunyan Foundation	Member	CSO6.3	Mosul	
Ajial Association for Intelligence and Creation Development	Lead	CSO8	Diyala	
Taawn Association for Consumer Protection	Member	CSO8.1	Diyala	
Hawaa Organization for Relief and Development	Member	CSO8.2	Diyala	
Youth Forum for Peace	Member	CSO8.3	Diyala	
Al Noor Universal Foundation (NUF)	Lead	CSO9	Diyala	
Shaoob for Democracy Support	Member	CSO9.1	Baghdad	

Hamurabi Organization	Member	CSO9.2	Tikreet
Iraqi Civic Action Network	Member	CSO9.3	Babil
Iraqi Social Education Team	Member	CSO9.4	Baghdad

*CSO 7: As explained above, this consortium was excluded from the grant process during the grant contract negotiations.

Annex 2: Summary of 8 CSO consortia funded projects

1. Promoting adequate services in Kirkuk Province

CSOs: Insan Iraqi Society for Relief and Development, National Institute for Human Rights, and Humanitarian Relief Association for Iraqi Turkmen Women

Governorate: Kirkuk

Summary: Will increase the capacities of key community members, enhance community cohesion, and create an environment propitious to long-term development. Project activities include training facilitators and volunteers in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods, conducting PRA in communities, and building capacities of community leaders in advocacy and development of a community response plan

2. Ensuring a better environment for our children

CSOs: Iraqi Institute for Development, Organization of Iraqi Family, and Haraa Humanitarian Organization

Governorates: Salah ad Din, Ninewa and Diyala

Summary: This project will raise awareness on the risks of solid waste and will advise local authorities on how to appropriately deal with solid waste. Project activities include identifying solid waste problems through questionnaires, conducting awareness-raising lectures, and producing brochures and radio episodes on solid waste.

3. Empower civil society organizations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

CSOs: KURDO (Kurdistan Reconstruction and Development Organization), YAO (Youth Activity Organization), and KEDO (Kurdistan Economic Development Organization)

Governorates: Sulaymaniyah, Erbil and Dahuk

Summary: This project will create a harmonized, transparent and constructive relationship between civil society organizations and local government and promote networking opportunities among civil society organizations. Project activities include training civil society members and local government officials on accountability, transparency and cooperation between civil society and local authorities, and forming a joint civil society-local government steering committee to formulate action plans.

4. Defending human rights in Missan

CSOs: Al Khair Organization, Al-Ahrar Organization for Human Rights, Iraqi Women Foundation, Al Amel Association and Journalists Youth Organization

Governorates: Missan

Summary: This project will build the capacities of member organizations and promote the principles of transparency, accountability and human rights and raise the awareness of citizens in selecting effective policies for the governorate. Project activities include delivering training courses and public educational lectures on human rights, producing TV and radio programs on human rights, and holding round table sessions attended by the government and the public

5. **Partnering for development**

CSOs: Al Rafidain Women Organization, Al Huda Institution for Strategic Studies, Al Ekha'a Organization for Democracy and Peace, and Iraq Flower for Democratic Organization

Governorates: Muthanna, Missan, Thi-Qar and Basra

Summary: This project will increase women's participation in public affairs and encourage new partnerships amongst civil society organizations. Project activities include forming 32 community development committees consisting of 256 women in 32 districts in the four governorates, training the committee members on the subject of humanitarian situation assessment, needs identification and monitoring, and delivering training for 32 local council officers on the subject of good governance and citizen's participation.

6. **Enhancing rights of minorities in Iraq**

CSOs: Salam Al Rafidain Organization, Association for Women and Children, Al Mahaba Forum, and Bunyan Foundation

Governorates: Baghdad, Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Dahuk and Ninewa

Summary: The project will enhance the role of academics in disseminating the concept of diversity and citizenship to promote minority rights in universities, raise awareness on minority rights among 6,000 university students, and publish a "Proposal of Basic Principles Paper of Minority Rights Protection Law in Iraq". Project activities include holding workshops targeting academics on the concept of minority rights, conducting lectures for students at universities, producing a "Proposal of Basic Principles Paper of Minority Rights Protection Law in Iraq".

7. **Strengthening women's role in the society and reducing violations against them**

CSOs: Ajial Association for Intelligence and Creation Development, Taawn Association for Consumer Protection, Hawaa Organization for Relief and Development, and Youth Forum for Peace

Governorate: Diyala

This project will raise awareness about the importance of women and their role in society. It also aims to expand women's participation in the process of development, and enhance the legal and social awareness of women who suffer from violence. Project activities include holding stakeholder meetings, organizing discussion seminars, holding training sessions for women on promoting civic values, conducting PRAs in communities, producing radio programs and conducting a legal awareness campaign for vulnerable women in marginalized communities.

8. **Promoting good governance to improve essential services**

CSOs: Al-Noor Universal Foundation, Shaoub for Democracy Culture Foundation, Hammurabi organization for Human Rights and Democracy Monitoring, Iraqi Civic Action Network, and the Iraqi Social Education Team

Governorates: All, except the Kurdistan Region

This project will strengthen the abilities of CSOs to determine priorities, expand local government's acceptance of good governance, improve citizen's participation in determining their priorities and undertake consultations with CSOs and community leaders. Project activities include holding workshops for CSO leaders on participation, accountability, priority setting and monitoring, publishing an analytical study on service and community participation, holding 30 forums to discuss the results of the study and to identify the means of advocacy, and forming pressure groups in each Governorate to call for good governance or enhanced public services.

Annex 3: Web Story

CSO Peer Knowledge Exchange in Iraq

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS SHARE EXPERIENCES. PHOTO BY UNDP IRAQ 2014

Peer knowledge exchange is a powerful learning tool. This was demonstrated during the**"2ⁿᵈ CSO Peer Knowledge Exchange Workshop"** UNDP organized in Erbil from 25 to 27 February 2014. "I have learned as much from my Peer as from the external facilitators of the event" says Mr. Ali Jassim of the Iraqi Institute for Development, "looking back at our old work I know that I am now better equipped to make a case for my organization and deliver results for our community".

This event is the second of its kind to bring together 31 CSOs to exchange experiences and learn from each other. CSOs were given a rare opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned with their peers. Peer learning also went beyond CSOs as thanks to the links created by this event, representatives of the Federal NGO Directorate and the Kurdistan Region NGO Department decided to initiate formal coordination discussions for the first time. Both Directorates have a wealth of experience and deal with common issues that would greatly benefit from this expanded coordination. Grant mechanisms, electronic registration processes and administrative structures were some of the points discussed.

CSOs, parliament representatives and NGO Directorate representatives (both representing the Federal level and the Kurdistan Regional level) were able to dialogue over a draft amendment to the current NGO Law that plans to include a provision for state budget grant funding. Representatives of Local Government also gave a good account of their perspective on relations with NGOs particularly for local service delivery.

On the CSO side, Mr. Jalil Khalil Muhammed Project Manager at Al Noor Universal Foundation explained how their interaction with their Local Government in Diyala has led to bringing attention on the underserved situation of the remote Al Abbara area. Engaging in a dialogue over local service delivery performance and 10,000 satisfaction questionnaires led to the identification of this issue. Thanks to this civil society – local authorities' partnership, initiatives for road paving and cleaning campaigns have already taken place in Al Abbara with further plans for service delivery improvements.

Ajial Association for Intelligence and Creation Development shared their work in spreading the Participatory Rapid Appraisal method, particularly to identify women's needs. Their work had a positive side result where men came forward seeing that they had similar needs as women, notably regarding literacy in rural areas and were then able to benefit from this woman-led initiative.

Internal organizational capacities of CSOs were also discussed. Salam Al Rafidain Organization shared an interesting experience where the UNDP grant they received led to an internal reflection process about human resources capacity gaps. To address this issue the CSO established and internal staff capacity development programme looking to address both qualitative and quantitative issues. Ultimately, the CSO feels is motivating their staff to work harder on their project to improve awareness on minority rights in Iraq.

This event was part of the UNDP project "Empowering CSOs in Iraq" were we are working with a group of 31 CSOs with a grant programme and capacity development activities. This project is implemented in cooperation with the CSO Committee of the Council of Representatives and UNOPS, with support from the Danish and Swedish cooperation agencies through the Iraq UNDAF Trust Fund.