Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b

Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
GEO	Governorate Electoral Office
GoI	Government of Iraq
HQ	Headquarters
ICI	International Compact with Iraq
IEAT	International Elections Assistance Team
IECI	Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq
ITF	Iraq Trust Fund
NDS	(Iraq) National Development Strategy
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
PSD	Private Security Detail
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SQL	Structured Query Language
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDG ITF	United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

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.[1]

The following report is an independent evaluation of the UNDG ITF project number G11-14b "Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI)/Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)." G11-14b was one of two components of a joint project between UNOPS, the United National Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), International Elections Assistance Team (IEAT); G11-14a covered all activities under the responsibility of UNDP.

Both G11-14 projects had an original timeframe of 12 months (April 9, 2007 – April 9, 2008), and a budget of $ 6,319,892, (with $3,735,426 for UNDP and $2,584,466 for UNOPS). The project submitted revisions to both its scope and timeframe in March 2008, and was extended until April 2009 (although G11-14b was operationally closed in September 2008). G11-14 was selected for evaluation as per the UNDG ITF criteria because it was a multi-agency programme.[2]

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 UNOPS/UNAMI, as well as a literature review of published papers and articles on Iraq, capacity development, and other relevant topics.

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 / capacity building programmes. These lessons learned can be found under Findings (Section V) as well as in Lessons and Generalizations (Section VI.)

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[1] Criteria for the Selection of UNDG ITF Projects to Be Evaluated, September 2009
[2] Ibid

II.   Introduction: Background and Context of the Programme

Iraq Elections in 2005: Iraq held its first democratic elections in 2005, including voting for a transitional National Assembly, the Governorate Council, and elections for the Council of Representatives. These three electoral events, major milestones for democracy in Iraq, were led by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) with great support from the United Nations.   The successful elections and set up of a new government helped Iraq to undertake a formal political transition from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to a plural polity that encompassed varying sects, and ideological and political factions.[3]

Iraq in 2007: Violence, Nascent Democratic Governance, and the Need for Change: This project was developed in early 2007, against the backdrop of an Iraq that was suffering from a severe deterioration in its security situation and an increase in sectarian violence. It was also a time where the newly elected and tenuously formed Iraqi government was trying to govern democratically, a completely new form of administration for a people who had not been able to freely participate in politics for decades. In general, it was felt that Iraq's governance capacity and planning processes were all very weak.[4] It was also believed that reforming and building the capacity of the new Iraqi government would be paramount to helping end the violence in Iraq and help put the country on a path towards stability and peace. If the new government was able to develop and implement a concrete national agenda to quickly address the basic needs and concerns of all Iraq's different communities, the country could be put on a path towards peace and prosperity.[5]

Support to the IECI/IHEC: The IECI[6] was in the process of transitioning from a Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)-designed body to a permanent IHEC at the time this project was designed, with the Board of Commissioners expected to be chosen in May 2007. The IHEC would be the highest electoral authority in Iraq, and as such responsible for all electoral events. Given the weighty role that elections can play in helping to bring about a free and democratic government, it would be vital to ensure that the IECI/IHEC had the technical and operational capacities to manage its electoral responsibilities. This was valid both for the IHEC as an institution as well as the needs / levels of its personnel.

UNOPS/UNAMI and Electoral Support in Iraq: UNOPS/UNAMI had been working with IECI on trainings to support the operational needs of the 2005 electoral events. After these activities were completed, UNOPS/UNAMI worked with IECI to develop and prioritise a list of additional training requirements. This aimed to meet the medium and longer-term needs of the IECI/IHEC in order for it to work effectively throughout Iraq Additional details are provided in question #13, which covers needs assessments. UNOPS and UNAMI had also worked together on support to electoral observation networks for the 2005 electoral events.

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[3] *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Services, December 8, 2009
[4] Information Note, European Commission Assistance to Iraq 2007
[5] Notes to the Un Security 5463rd Council Meeting, from Angela Kane, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, 15 June 2006
[6] The IECI was initially mandated in 2004 to conduct election activities for the transitional period. The Law on the Independent High Electoral Commission by the Council (IHEC) of Representatives on 23 January 2007, which transitioned the IECI to the IHEC)

III.   Description of the Project / Programme

a.   *Logic Theory*

This project aimed to support the IECI / IHEC in becoming a sustainable institution, operating independently, efficiently, and transparently in line with professional standards. This would be achieved through the provision of trainings in organizational development and management (UNDP) and in nine specialized skills and technical areas (UNOPS.) The activities of UNOPS were responsible for increasing the capacity of up to 700 IECI / IHEC employees in the priority topics of logistics, procurement, IT/database design, graphic design, translation, capacity building/training, voter registration, security, and other general skills.

The training programme was designed based on a comprehensive assessment and planning process from both a combination of past UNOPS/UNAMI programmes to the IECI, and a UNAMI/IEAT assessment mission to Iraq in November 2006. Areas of key priority (as listed above) aimed to address the most critical mid- and long-term needs of the IECI/IHEC's support functions at both the headquarter (HQ) and governorate electoral office (GEO) levels.

It was expected that UNOPS would find suitable training service providers (according to UN standard procedures) to conduct activities both inside and outside of Iraq. Venues and dates would depend on the availability of the resources in country necessary for the particular topic.

b.   *External Factors Affecting Success*

As per the project proposal, the following various factors would have the potential to affect the successful realization of project objectives and activities. The points below are adapted from pages 27-28 of the original project proposal:

▪ Short Timeframe for Project Implementation: This project will operate under a tight timeframe regarding the provision of the required capacity building support. Given the volatility of the situation in Iraq there is always the possibility that delays might arise that could seriously impact upon the project timeline.

▪ Security and Political Uncertainty: The current political situation in Iraq is constantly evolving and it is always conceivable that the management and personnel of IECI might have difficulty focusing on the capacity building of their institution – crucial though it is for its future success – given the security threats they face in the realisation of their work on a daily basis. Another factor of uncertainty is the date of the next electoral events. If called in early, this might have a negative effect on the availability of IECI counterparts (e.g. participation in training and other capacity building events and availability for coordination, etc.).

▪ Support and Cooperation of the IECI and other partners: It is essential that this project benefit from a positive working relationship with the IECI in order to develop a

programme of capacity building activities, which will be of optimal benefit to the IECI. It will be essential that all phases are carried out as a joint exercise between the project and the IECI. This will be, for example, essential when determining the time schedule of capacity building and training activities (incl. participation of individual IECI staff members etc.).

▪ Staff Retention: An essential factor in ensuring the success of the project both in the immediate and longer term will be the retention of staff by the IECI/IHEC. Should the IECI/IHEC be unable to retain their personnel this would mean that the capacity building training provided by the project would fail to have any long-term sustainable benefit to the Commission, as those who had received the training support left the organisation.

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.[7] 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, training reports, budget revision request, no-cost extension request), as well as a literature review on relevant articles and published papers. Amongst others, the consultant utilized:
- Iraq's National Development Strategy 2005-2007
- The International Compact With Iraq, including its updated Joint Monitoring Matrices of 2007 and 2008
- UN Joint Assistance Strategy for Iraq 2008-2010
- Capacity Building Assessment Report, IECI, 12 November – 19 December 2006, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division 21 January 2007
- Conference on Lessons Learned and Future Planning from 2008/2009 Electoral Events, IHEC, IEAT, April 2009

Evaluation Objectives

The following are the objectives of all UNOPS ITF project evaluations. They were designed based on the common ITF guidelines[8] and take into account evaluation scope, duration, and resources available.
- *Development Results:* To assess the achieved progress and results against stipulated programme / project results and objectives on all stakeholders, especially beneficiary groups

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[7] Ibid
[8] UNDG ITG Programme / Project Evaluations, Terms of Reference With Guidance

- *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

Measuring Capacity Development in One Month: Evaluating a multi-faceted capacity building project for a pivotal agency such as the IHEC is a massive undertaking. Such an evaluation would require significant time and efforts, including various technical / electoral experts, and a budget for at least three to six months. In addition, and quite importantly, <u>an evaluation of the capacity development of the IHEC would also require measurements over a long period of time, (preferably before and after electoral events) and not just a snapshot assessment.</u> Impact level measurements are not possible given the current evaluation's scope and resources, and this will be explained in further detail in Section V.

V.   Findings

As mentioned in the section on challenges on page eight, it will not be possible to measure impact or higher levels of causal logic within this particular evaluation. Instead, the consultant will i) assess the level of projects results in comparison with set targets, and ii) analyze the underlying processes that went into the design and implementation of this project.

Please note that while this evaluation can assess whether or not the project achieved its activities and outputs as per its original logical framework, it would require an impact evaluation or other appropriate evaluation methodology to determine the effect that these trainings had on the specific skills and operational capabilities of the IHEC (i.e. did the graphic design training of February/March 2007-8 genuinely improve the design of ballots in 2009-10, what were the impacts of the recruitment skills training of May 2008 on hiring practices in 2009 etc.) Impact evaluations, which are becoming increasingly utilized by donors such as the World Bank and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, are extremely technical, costly, and require very specific research skills. They are helpful in attributing the results of a project directly and solely to the project itself, and often require a multi-year commitment. In addition to an impact evaluation, the project could have considered a "real-time" evaluation to measure the changes in capacity from 2007-8. This could have been conducted for example, with the IHEC as they implemented the three electoral events of 2009-10 to gauge improvements from previous elections. This will be explained in further detail in the sections below.

a.   Logical Framework Analysis

This section of the evaluation report will examine the extent to which the project achieved its set targets as per its logical framework. The original logical framework for this project was a holistic capacity building project for the IECI/IHEC that combined the planned efforts of both UNDP/UNAMI and UNOPS/UNAMI. The development objective, the highest levels of the logical framework would be achieved through the joint efforts of UNDP and UNOPS capacity building interventions, with indicators and means of verification applicable to both agencies. The immediate objectives, outputs and activities sections of the log frame are clearly divided between the two agencies, with a different set of indicators and measurements.

The output of UNOPS' component of the project was "Improved capacity of up to 700 IECI/IHEC employees, following the delivery of training courses in nine priority areas (logistics, procurement, IT/database design, graphic design, translation, capacity building/training, voter registration, security, general skills). The four activities that UNOPS set out to achieve were:

i.   Based on identified training needs in the Training Plan (content, trainees, timeframe), develop TORs for training providers in the various priority areas.
ii. Identify suitable regional training institutions/companies and experts to conduct the training courses (e.g. competitive process).

iii. Contract the selected institutions/companies/experts to provide the required training
iv. Provide logistics support and ensure that the necessary trainings are provided to the satisfaction of IECI/IHEC.

In addition, a revision to the project's scope and realignment of the budget in March 2008 led to UNOPS undertaking six new activities (some of which were originally the responsibility of UNDP but were transferred to UNOPS). UNOPS was able to organize these additional activities without any changes to their overall budget, using budget savings and shifting between budget sub-headings.

- Orientation workshop for the new IHEC Board of Commissioners (Delhi, India, May 2008)
- IHEC HR Capacity Building (detailed assessment, development training schedule, SOPs)
- IHEC Finance Capacity Building (detailed assessment, development training schedule, SOPs)
- Two additional workshops for electoral awareness (December 2007)
- GEO Director Selection process (media campaign, translators, interpreters, equipment) (February/March 2008))
- Support to IHEC voter registration operation (March - June 2008)

Activity Achievement

From a quantitative perspective, <u>it appears that UNOPS successfully completed all of its planned activities</u>. Over the course of the project, UNOPS organized 16 capacity building trainings for the IECI/IHEC. UNOPS' trainings benefitted 460 IECI/IHEC members, and according to project reports, this decrease in beneficiaries was due to UNOPS being asked to support GEO directorate elections, and the need to divert funds from trainings to this activity. Table One below (adapted from the G11-14b final report submitted to the ITF) below illustrates the results and beneficiaries of each of the facilitated trainings.

Table 1: Overview of the 16 Capacity Building Trainings Organized by UNOPS

Training	Achievements
1. External Orientation Workshop	Directed to nine Commissioners, this guided the participants on the principles for the organisation of elections in conflict and post-conflict environments.
2. Two Legal Drafting Workshops	Provided training to ten people involved in the development of the electoral regulatory framework with practical experience of regulatory review and drafting techniques by detailed review of specific regulations and drafting of revised regulations.
3. Logistics Planning Training	Targeted 25 IHEC staff members, was an opportunity for the logistics team to improve their capacity in management of freight transfer, planning of consignments, negotiation skills, procurement procedures and contractual requirements, storage and handling of sensitive materials
4. Field Security for Elections Workshop,	Increased the understanding of 25 IHEC field security staff of their responsibilities in coordination, and implementation of a security plan provided for transportation and storage of election material, and security of staff and electoral facilities.
5. Basic Computer Skills	Designed with the IHEC, and involving 235 personnel, this provided the participants with fundamental elements of the most commonly used computer programmes to ensure a broader IT understanding amongst the staff of the IHEC.

6. Structured Query Language (SQL) training	Provided 14 participants with relevant elements of Visual Studio and SQL Server Administration, tools that were then applied for the management of the voter registry.
7. Basic Logistics Management	Held in two sessions for respectively 26 and 25 participants, touched upon various aspects of logistics, providing practical experience for IHEC staff involved in logistics on components of managing a wide scale logistics operation such as electoral events.
8. Election Budgeting Seminar	A working session targeting eight members of IHEC staff who specifically work on the development of operational budgets for electoral events, taught the participants how to develop operational budgeting skills.
9. Two Graphic Design Software Trainings,	For five members of the IHEC Graphic Design Unit, improved the knowledge of IHEC graphic designers in the application of specific graphic design software packages for the professional preparation of materials necessary for electoral activities e.g. ballot papers and billboards.
10. Advanced Voter Education Workshop	This training programme, targeting the Public Outreach Division of the IHEC, was developed in two sessions. The first was a training of trainers for 18 staff of the HQ Public Outreach Division. The second training was for 18 relevant members of staff from the Public Outreach Divisions of GEOs. Two staff members who participated in the first training were chosen as co-facilitators for this session. The course addressed designing, management and monitoring skills for voter education activities.
11. Warehouse Management Training,	Directed at 24 staff members of the IHEC, provided practical experience and insight for IHEC staff involved in warehouse operations, for the purpose of ensuring familiarity with warehouse operational procedures, safe working practices, packing of kits and secure storage of goods for electoral events.
12. Recruitment Selection Skills Training	A hands-on workshop on development / application of standard recruitment selection procedures, with 34 members of IHEC staff from HQ and GEOs participating in the workshop.
13. Voter Registration Cascade Training	Designed to prepare IHEC staff for the upcoming voter registration. 65 participants were involved in the training that was divided in two parts: a preparatory session for 25 participants from HQ and an extended training for 40 GEO trainers.
15. Private Security Detail (PSD) Refresher Course	Held for 11 participants to ensure up to date knowledge and skills of the PSDs providing security to the IHEC.
15. GEO Director Selection Advertising Campaign	UNOPS was requested to support the IHEC with the urgent need to select new GEO Directors by placing media advertisements across Iraq. There were two phases of media campaigns. The first campaign was February 14-28 in both newspapers and radio, advertising the positions of eight GEO Directors. The second phase was only for the Governorate of Ninewah, which had failed to solicit a sufficiently adequate response from the first media campaign. The second phase took place from April 1 and lasted for two weeks.
16. Voter Registration Update Lessons Learned Workshop	Guided the 34 participants through the assessment of the results achieved and constrains faced, both in HQ and at GEO levels during the six weeks of the Voter Registration Update. This resulted in recommendations for future similar exercises as well as for the coordination of the next electoral event.

Output Achievement

In addition to achieving all of its set activities, <u>an analysis of the project's results achieved yields that UNOPS was successful in meeting its output</u>. Please see table two below which demonstrates UNOPS' achievements at the output level. This table was provided in the final report to the ITF and was modified from the original logical

Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b   12
Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC
April 2010

framework (as per changes made to ITF reporting recruitments). The table adequately captures UNOPS' achievements at the output level.

Table 2: Results Achieved by Output

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Means of Verification	Comments (if any)
IP Outcome: Improved skills of IECI/IHEC staff at HQ and Governorate Electoral office						
IP Output: Improved capacity of up to 700 IECI/IHEC employees, following the delivery of training courses in the following priority areas: ▪ Logistics ▪ Procurement ▪ IT/Database design ▪ Graphic Design ▪ Translation ▪ Capacity ▪ Building ▪ Voter ▪ Registration ▪ Security ▪ General Skills	# of training courses delivered	Assessment missions to Iraq (June 2005 and November 2006) identified the need of capacity building for the IHEC training to enable the Commission to perform its duties in an optimal manner to the benefit of all Iraqis	n/a	16	Supervision and monitoring by project team on all contracted services. Feedback and reports from the IHEC and their personnel on the quality of the capacity building activities conducted Exchange with relevant partner agencies	
	# of IHEC trainees		Up to 700 IECI/IHEC employees	460		The reason for not reaching the initially planned 700 IHEC trainees was the change of scope in the project approved with the project extension. The support to the recruitment of GEO Directors was not a part of the original budget and funds initially committed to training were diverted to this exercise.
	# of IHEC priority areas covered under trainings		9	9		

Although the achievements at the output and activity levels are evident, <u>it is however more difficult to ascertain the extent to which UNOPS and this project contributed towards the development and immediate objectives</u>. The development objective, to be jointly achieved by UNOPS and UNDP was: "This project is in support of the institutional development of the IECI/IHEC as a sustainable institution, operating

independently, efficiently and transparently in line with professional standards." The set indicators to measure the development objective were:

− Level of institutional preparedness for future electoral events in Iraq: organizational capacity to carry out electoral activities independently (Board of Commissioners, senior management, staff in various divisions and units).
− Success of future electoral events conducted by the IHEC and level of assistance required from the outside.

The immediate objective to be achieved by UNOPS was: "Improving skills of IECI/IHEC staff at HQ and Governorate Electoral offices through provision of training (implemented by UNOPS)". Indicators to measure the success of this objective were:

− Improved performance of IECI/IHEC staff in their respective functions at both HQ and governorate level.
− Reduced dependence on international assistance during electoral operations (to be measured by both UNOPS and UNDP as per the original logframe).

Capacity building at the various levels as designed in the G11-14 project proposal will invariably require numerous years and continuous interventions in order for the new skills and knowledge to be learned, practiced, and sustainable. The consultant does not believe that this project was aiming to radically transform the entire management and operations of the IHEC within a 12 month period, and it is therefore not surprising that there have been follow on projects to G11-14. However, despite the complexities involved in building long-term capacity, the <u>project should have measured and reported upon its indicators at the development and immediate objective levels. The consultant can find no evidence of genuine measurement of these higher levels of the logical framework throughout the narrative or final reports</u>.

The final report states that IHEC's personnel are now "more confident, independent and motivated, and ultimately better prepared to deal with the upcoming electoral events". However this is based more on anecdotal and personal feelings, rather than real quantitative or qualitative evidence. The fact that IHEC successfully participated in trainings can certainly contribute to their motivation and independence, <u>but additional monitoring and evaluation should have been applied for statistically valid confirmation</u>. The report also states "This was confirmed at the Lessons Learned and Future Planning from 2008/2009 Electoral Events Conference held in Istanbul in April 2009 where the Voter Registration Update in August 2008 was identified as a success compared to the one held in 2005." <u>This lessons learned report is very helpful in understanding some of the effects that the trainings had on increasing the capacity of the IHEC to organize and manage electoral events. However, this report alone is not a wholly sufficient measurement to gauge and understand the impact that the project had towards achieving its development and immediate objectives.</u>

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 Beneficiaries:* IECI personnel members who receive capacity building support, though the whole Commission will benefit as a result of these measures. These personnel would include the Commissioners, senior management and up to 700 members of the IECI/IHEC who will be recipients of training support in the nine priority areas outlined above.
- *Indirect Beneficiaries:* All potential Iraqi voters who would benefit from an enhanced Iraqi electoral process in the future. Facilitating the participation of all Iraqi voters would also bring benefits to the whole Iraqi population as it would be a step on the road towards ensuring a feeling of 'inclusion' and ownership amongst Iraqi citizens in the determination of their country's future.

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

Table 3: Project Results / Impact on Beneficiaries

Beneficiary Target	Actual Results / Impact to Date
Commission, senior management, and up to 700 IECI/IHEC members receive training support	- 460 staff from the IECI/IHEC were trained as a result of this programme in a multitude of technical and operational areas. Please see Table One for specific training details.
All potential Iraqi voters benefitting from enhanced Iraqi electoral processes in the future	- This is an intangible outcome and as such is quite difficult to measure. In the absence of any large-scale population data, it is impossible to specifically gauge the benefits to the general Iraqi public. This may be possible to evaluate in the next months / years after additional electoral events are organized and assessed.

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 (taken from both the proposal and final report):
- MDG 8: "This project will contribute tangentially to the achievement of MDG 8 concerning the global partnership for development. By providing access for the IECI to the most suitable capacity building measures the project will assist the IECI in their efforts to facilitate in the creation of a stable political system in Iraq. This system is essential to enable Iraq to develop in an acceptable and positive manner for all its citizens."
- NDS: Pillar 4: strengthening good governance and improve security.

- ICI: "The Compact aims to consolidate peace and pursue political, economic and social development. Within this framework, the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the IHEC is a significant contribution to promote good governance and improve the political framework."

MDG: With regards to MDG 8, the indicators that the UN provides for measuring achievement of this goal are economically focused, and are measured in terms of official development assistance, market access, and debt sustainability. Based on the nature and design of this project, its obvious that these indicators cannot be an accurate measurement of this project's contribution. Therefore it would be more appropriate to look at how this project contributed towards good governance, which is described in more detail below.

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."[9] This project directly supported the capacity development of the IHEC to organize and manage electoral events in Iraq. As such, the project directly contributed towards the NDS as it created the conditions for the implementation of fair and transparent electoral processes, a key element of good governance.

In addition, the NDS specifically mentions, "Strengthening good governance and security will require…Supporting the Electoral Commission, including voter registration and voter education."[10] As mentioned above, this project directly supported the building and advancing of the IHEC's capacity to independently manage elections. While there are some questions as to the exact qualitative achievement of the trainings organized by this project (see page nine above), it is clear that the project contributed towards this aim.

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.

ICI: Both the GoI and international development partners often utilize the Joint Monitoring Matrix[11] 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 or support to electoral institutions. It can be argued that this aimed to support "ICI 3.1.2: implementation of a political/legislative timetable", however it is impossible to measure this without set indicators for success. The final project report states that "Strengthening the Electoral Commission helped facilitate that the electoral events planned by the Government of Iraq were carried out in a transparent and efficient manner and in respect of Iraq's international obligations such

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[9] World Bank in Governance: The World Banks Experience, July 2004
[10] Iraq's National Development Strategy 2005-2007, page xii

[11] http://www.iraqcompact.org/ici_document/AnnexIV_JMM_English2008.pdf

as those arising from the United Nations international covenant on civil and political rights to which Iraq is a signatory country." However the consultant feels this to be a highly subjective statement, without qualitative or quantitative indicators to verify its validity.

A more appropriate measure of success is the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq, which specifically mentions the institutional development of the IHEC as a key area of priority for UN support. Outcome 1 of the governance sector of the UN strategy is concerned with "strengthened electoral processes in Iraq", with Output 1.1 defined as "increased institutional capacity of the Independent Higher Electoral Commission (IHEC) to independently carry out elections.[12]" This project definitely contributed towards achieving both outcome 1 and output 1.1, as the capacity building provided by UNOPS was successful in increasing the technical knowledge and skills of both the IHEC as an institution, as well as for specific employees. Again, there are some grey areas with regards to the actual level of capacity that was built, but it is clear that the UNOPS/UNAMI trainings contributed to capacity development. As such, this helps to contribute towards improving the IHEC's ability to independently manage and implement electoral events, and overall, contributed toward strengthening electoral processes in Iraq on a broader scale.

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 justifications for this project's activities. These included:

− Given the critical role that the IHEC would play in bringing about a free and democratic Iraq, it was vital to ensure that it had the necessary technical skills and support to organize and manage elections.
− A functional and well-developed IHEC would allow Iraq to adequately prepare for upcoming electoral processes. By enhancing the electoral framework in Iraq, it was expected that necessary conditions would be created to facilitate the participation of all members of the Iraqi population in electoral events.
− The organization of fair and transparent elections in Iraq would contribute to strengthening good governance and overall democratic progress.

Progress and results made towards tackling each of these development concerns will be detailed in Table Four below, as well as an assessment of whether the issue has been sufficiently addressed.

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[12] United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008 – 2010, page 21

Table 4: Project's Contribution Towards Underlying Development Issues

Underlying Development Issue	Achievements / Results	Has the Issue Been Addressed?
a. It was vital to ensure that the IHEC the necessary technical skills and support to organize and manage elections.	▪ The project successfully conducted / facilitated 16 trainings for IHEC staff in the nine key priory areas as outlined in the proposal along with additional trainings as identified in the project revisions (see pages 18-19.) ▪ Although there are some questions regarding the actual qualitative achievements of these trainings, it is evident that these trainings helped to increase the technical and operational capacities of the IHEC. This is clear from the training reports as well as the fact that the IHEC has been able to manage numerous electoral events (with a decreasing level of support from external assistance) since the close of this project.	Yes this issue has been satisfactorily addressed <u>to the extent that one project with an original time frame of 12 months could affect the institutional and organizational capacity of a large and complex agency such as the IHEC</u>. Capacity development of the IHEC is a lengthy and multi-pronged process. While the project was successful in addressing some of the underlying issues, it is not a surprise that there were was another project that built on the lessons learned of G11-14b (G11-19), and it is likely that there will be additional capacity development projects in the years to come.
b. A functioning IHEC would enable the Commission to prepare for upcoming electoral events.	▪ The trainings provided by UNOPS/UNAMI helped to contribute to the overall functioning of the IHEC, particular in the nine key priority areas as identified in the 2006 assessments. ▪ As mentioned above, the functioning of the IHEC can be demonstrated from the organization of 2009-2010 electoral events in Iraq that were seen as successful both domestically and internationally.	Yes, <u>as these trainings not only increased the skills and capacities of the IHEC's staff, but also were in the areas vital to independently managing future electoral events</u>. Although outside of the scope of this particular evaluation, it is evident from the relatively smooth and trouble free electoral events held in 2009-2010 that these trainings achieved their ultimate purpose.
c. The organization of fair and transparent elections in Iraq would contribute to strengthening good governance in Iraq	▪ Although the exact impact of the UNOPS/UNAMI capacity building trainings on the ability of the IHEC to organize fair and free elections is difficult to determine without an impact evaluation (see page nine, paragraph two), there are assumed linkages that can be made between the successful organisation of electoral events in 2009 – 2010, and the increase in peace and stability generally seen in Iraq over the last three years.	Yes, similar to #1 this issue has been successful to the extent it can be given the relatively short timeframe of implementation compared to the time required to bring about good governance in a post-conflict state. This can only truly be answered in the next years and possibly decades, as more electoral events are held in Iraq, and its ability to govern democratically is tested.

Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b
Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC
April 2010

18

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 the IHEC had the necessary technical skills and operational knowledge to independently manage electoral events in Iraq. In the absence of any population-based data that measures how Iraqis feel about the capacity of the IHEC and the relation between the IHEC's capacity and their desire or willingness to vote, it is not possible to determine the specific effects that this project had on increasing voter participation in Iraqi elections. While there was a marked increase in voter turnout from the January 2009 governorate elections (53%) to the March 2010 parliamentary elections (62%),[13] this may be attributed to a number of reasons, which may or may not include the public's perception of the IHEC to manage fair and transparent elections.

However, this project definitely contributed towards increasing the capacity of the IHEC in a number of technical and operational areas. It therefore expected that this would contribute towards improving the quality of future service provision, vis-à-vis the IHEC i) independently and effectively organising and managing future electoral events and ii) having knowledge of electoral skills and process where no capacity previously existed.

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 stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project are the IECI/IHEC, both as an institution as well as the specific personnel working in the various departments. This project appears to have actively engaged and consulted with the IECI/IHEC during the design stage, which included two formal needs assessments in June 2005 and November 2006, as well as needs identified during a UNOPS/UNAMI project to support the IECI in 2005 (please see question #13 for further assessment details.)

The specific areas prioritized for training under this capacity development project came directly from the assessments and discussions with the IECI/IHEC themselves, along with various external stakeholders who had been involved with electoral activities since 2003. This meant that project activities were designed directly by the beneficiaries, together with experts who were aware of electoral needs in Iraq, as well as best practice.

Engagement with stakeholders and beneficiaries during project implementation: Project activities appeared to be well coordinated between UNOPS, UNAMI and the IECI/IHEC throughout most of the implementation period. A number of the trainings were led or facilitated by IHEC staff directly, with support from UNOPS/UNAMI.   There were standard operating procedures developed between the three agencies that included steps and templates for:
− Definition of detailed training activity outlines based on the project's training matrix

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[13] Numbers as reported from the IHEC and UNAMI websites.

- Endorsement of training activity outlines by IHEC
- Activity preparation
- Activity implementation
- Activity evaluation and reporting, including details on participants, delivery, feedback, lessons learned, recommendations, etc.

In addition, there were regular weekly meetings between the IEAT, which includes UNOPS, UNAMI and the IECI/IHEC as well as other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. During these meetings, partners shared results, coordinated activities, and updated each other on various electoral developments and progress. There was also a weekly bulletin updating IEAT members of activities and plans. In general, there appeared to be significant engagement with the IHEC as both a beneficiary and key stakeholder during implementation, as well as active coordination and communication with the other members of the IEAT.

Relevance

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

The table below examines the project's output, and determines how / if it contributed to the national needs and priorities of Iraqis in 2007-2008. When reading this table, please keep in mind the context of Iraq in 2007, specifically the achievements of the 2005 elections and the challenges facing the IHEC, as described on page five.

Table 5: Project's Contribution Towards National/Local Needs and Priorities

Output	Did it contribute to national priorities?
Improving skills of IECI/IHEC staff at HQ and Governorate Electoral offices through provision of training (implemented by UNOPS)[14]	▪ Yes, as the ability of Iraq to manage and organize its own elections, the aim to which this project contributed, was a priority at both the national and international levels, This is broadly referred to in the National Development Strategy (NDS) of 2005-7 and the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) as well as specifically laid out in the UN-Iraq Joint Assistance Strategy (explained in detail on pages 15-16). ▪ 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.[15] As such, the ability of Iraq to have the capacity to implement and manage electoral events, using the latest technologies and with skilled electoral professionals is a major priority for all Iraqis.

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[14] Programme output G2.4 of Cluster G Programme Matrix.
[15] ABC/BBC/ARD/NHK Polls.

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

The design of this project's strategy was very much linked to the context of Iraq in 2007, from both a national perspective but also from the view of the international community. This analysis is based on the following:

– Although the 2005 elections in Iraq were deemed as successful, they were heavily supported by various bodies from the Untied Nations and other external agencies. As Iraq re-gained its sovereignty in 2005, it would be necessary for the IECI/IHEC to play a larger role in the management and organization of electoral events in the future, and eventually organize such events without external assistance.

– With the swearing in of the new Iraqi government in spring 2006 and uncertainty as to when the next elections would be held, 2007 was an appropriate time for the IECI/IHEC to work on building its institutional and operational capacities, as its responsibilities vis-à-vis organizing electoral events would be less for at least the 12 months following the start date of the project. This is not to say that institutional development cannot happen during an electoral event, but that there would be more time and space available for the IECI/IHEC staff to focus on capacity building as such.

– As mentioned in further detail in question #13 below, the specific strategy for this project was designed based on a number of comprehensive assessments that gauged the technical and operational capacities of the IHEC, both as an institution and the personnel that staffed the IHEC. In addition the IECI/IHEC invited UNAMI to provide logistics and technical support, as well as participate in development of the institutional capacity of the commission.

– Finally, Security Council Resolution 1770 mandated that the UN advise, support, and assist the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) on the development of processes for holding elections and referenda. Although this resolution was adopted after the project was approved, it definitely had an impact on project implementation as well as coordination amongst the IEAT.

Therefore it appears that the project's strategy took into account the local context in terms of the current and future needs, capabilities and functions of the IECI/IHEC in 2007 as well as the roles and responsibilities of agencies supporting elections in Iraq.

Partnerships

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

This project was designed based on lessons learned from a previous project where UNOPS and UNAMI had provided operational support to the IECI for the electoral events of 2005, as well as other focussed needs assessments. As a result of this project, UNOPS and UNAMI identified key areas where capacity was lacking within the IECI and would need to be improved in order for Iraq to manage electoral events without external assistance. In general, the partnership between UNOPS and UNAMI appears to have worked quite well. Given their mandate and the fact that UNAMI had conducted the technical assessment for this project, it was clear that UNAMI would be responsible for technical oversight and support. Similarly, given UNOPS' mandate and areas of

expertise, it made sense for them to be responsible for logistics, operations and financial matters. As there was no overlap or competition with regards to technical mandate, the partnership between these two agencies was well designed. This is discussed further in the Lessons Learned section on page 27.

As mentioned earlier, G11-14b was a joint project that was supposed to complement the work of UNDP under G11-14a, which aimed to improve the institutional capacity of the IECI/IHEC in a number of organizational areas including finance, management and support to the Board of Commissioners. This was one of the first multi-agency projects funded by the UNDG ITF, and unfortunately the partnership between the three agencies was not as smooth as originally planned. As reported by various members of the project team, it was initially expected that there would be closer cooperation between UNDP, UNOPS and UNAMI. However, due to a number of reasons (including the delay in the hiring of a specific project manger from UNDP to supervise the work of G11-14a, which hampered reporting and collaboration) this was not in the case in practice.

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

The primary aim of this project centred on developing the capacity of the IECI/IHEC. Specifically it sought to improve the skills of IECI/IHEC staff at both the central and governorate levels through specialized technical and operational trainings in nine key areas. However, despite capacity development being the main aim and activity of this project, it is very difficult to assess, in a statistically and neutrally valid manner, the extent to which this project actually developed the capacity of the IECI/IHEC staff. This is the opinion of the consultant, but was also confirmed in interviews with key project staff.

This is not to say that the project did not contribute towards capacity development. The project successfully organized trainings / workshops in 16 different areas for 460 members of the IECI/IHEC staff. Prior to these trainings, IECI/IHEC staff had little to no knowledge about electoral processes, and so it can be assumed that these trainings contributed towards IECI/IHEC staff gaining new skills and capabilities. In addition, there is a great deal of anecdotal information from UN staff who have been involved with the IHEC over a long period of time and can now see tangible changes in capacity. Both UN and IHEC staff specifically mention graphic design and logistics as areas that have seen marked positive changes in capacity as a result of this project. In the absence of any formal assessment between G11-14b and the follow up project G11-19, it is difficult for this evaluation to specifically measure the capacity that was built as a result of this project. However, interviews with IHEC staff, project staff, and the sheer fact that the electoral events of 2008-10 have been relatively successful, demonstrate that there has been a development in capacity.

As discussed further in question 14, while there were two indicators set up within the original logical framework to assess if capacity was built, they were not adequately measured during the course of this project. Also as discussed in question 11 and 12,

changes in capacity development could have been measured through periodic capacity assessments or an end-of-project evaluation in 2008.

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?

The overall aim of this project was to build the capacity of the IECI/IHEC to become a sustainable institution that could operate independently, efficiently and transparently. However, as mentioned earlier in this report, institutional capacity development of the IECI/IHEC was never intended or could realistically be achieved within a 12-month period. The original one-year timeframe was designed as per UNDG ITF guidelines[16], and not based on the genuine amount of time it would take to build a sustainable electoral institution. Given that there were never any elections in Iraq prior to 2005, and that there was no history of democratic governance or general public participation in political affairs, capacity building of the IECI/IHEC would take years to achieve and for it to be operational and technically knowledgeable without external support. It is therefore not surprising that there was a second capacity building project funded by the UNDG ITF that followed the closure of G11-14b (G11-19) and there are already plans for a third IHEC capacity building project to cover the next three years.

However, sustainability of this project's activities can be gauged by the fact that the IHEC was able to successfully organize and manage a number of electoral events in 2008, 2009 and 2010. In general, the electoral events that followed this project were deemed to be credible, with acceptance of results by both Iraqis and the international community.

It will only be possible to know if the achievements made under this and other IHEC capacity building projects are sustainable in years to come, as external assistance to the IHEC decreases, and it eventually operates by itself.

Lessons Learned

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

- *In order to know if genuine capacity building has been achieved, it is necessary to plan more frequent capacity assessments or an evaluation directly after the close of project activities:* It is clear from project reports and interviews that capacity has been built amongst the IHEC staff trained under this project. Various new skills and technologies were passed on to staff at both the central and governorate levels in a multitude of operational and technical areas. However, in the absence of a final evaluation or assessment of the IHEC (and as mentioned in question nine), it is difficult to specifically gauge the exact impact this project had vis-à-vis capacity development. It would have been helpful for both the implementing agency (to know if their project worked) and the donor (to know if their funds actually brought about

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[16] Although the UNDG ITF allowed for the submission of two-year project proposals, the consultant was told in numerous interviews that most of the project that received funding were only for 12 months.

the result they wanted to achieve) if the IHEC underwent such analysis periodically throughout implementation, or at minimum, at the end of activities (and before the start of phase two / G11-19).

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

▪ *Utilize a standardized reporting template / format to determine the technical outcome of the capacity building activities:* Each of the capacity building trainings organized under this project were supposed to be accompanied by a final report that outlined the results achieved. However, the reports vary in their quality and content, and ultimately do not provide enough information to know if capacity was truly built as a result of the training. <u>Future capacity building projects should utilize a standardized reporting template that ensures the project will collect appropriate and adequate types of data to know if activities were truly successful, which should ideally include comparison of knowledge before and after the training. This will help to improve the specific trainings themselves, but also allow for further measurement into the overall capacity development achievements.</u>

▪ *From the operational perspective, a member of the project team should be at the IHEC on a daily basis to better organize and implement project activities:* As reported by the project team, there was a significant amount of logistical work required to facilitate and prepare for the capacity building trainings under this project. During most of the project's implementation, UNOPS staff, who had operational responsibility for facilitating the trainings, were based in Amman. It would have been helpful to have a member of staff specifically working in the IHEC on a daily basis, allowing for a direct focal point to handle logistics and operations. The consultant believes that this was already was remedied in phase two of the IHEC capacity building project.

▪ *In addition to technical and operational areas, it is important to focus on developing capacity in monitoring and evaluation for relevant IHEC staff:* As mentioned throughout this report, there is a large gap in statistically valid data to demonstrate the change in knowledge or practice as a result of the project. Interviews with the IHEC staff indicated that they lacked the skills to truly evaluate the capacity building activities -- they could get feedback from participants on the organization and content of the training -- but were not able to measure if capacity itself was actually built. Future programmes should focus on improving the required social science research skills to ensure that there is the internal capacity and necessary mechanisms for the IHEC to adequately measure its capacity building activities.

Operational Effectiveness

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

This project was designed based on combination of both comprehensive assessments and identified needs from the following events / sources:

i. An Electoral Needs Assessment Mission was conducted in June 2005, which identified range of training needs for the IECI and its personnel. In addition to recommending specifics topics for immediate training (to help the IECI manage the 2005 electoral events), an additional finding was that there was a great need for capacity building programs that focused on the longer-term roles and responsibilities of the IECI as an institution, as well as for specific individual departments.

ii. UNOPS/UNAMI provided capacity building trainings for IECI staff to meet their short-term needs for the 2005 electoral events in Iraq. After these trainings, UNAMI/UNOPS worked together with the IECI to identify additional areas of need that required for further capacity development. These areas determined the required topics for the IHEC/IECI to meet its medium and longer terms at both the central and governorate levels.

iii. UNAMI IEAT conducted an assessment mission in November 2006 to further understand and refine the training needs of the IECI. The mission included an overview and review of previous capacity building activities, identified training additional areas, and recommended training priorities for future capacity building programs. This report was a critical resource utilized for the design of this programme.

It appears that the project was designed in an inclusive, thorough and systematic manner. It involved appropriate IECI/IHEC staff as well as external stakeholders, and tried to utilize lessons learned / experiences from past capacity building programmes while attempting to anticipate (and eventually meet) future electoral needs in Iraq.

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

The logical framework for this project demonstrated a clear rationale and causality at each level of the matrix. There were strong linkages between the different levels, so that it was generally clear how the activities fit into the outputs, the outputs into the immediate objective, etc. From the immediate objective level and down, there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities between UNOPS and UNDP, and the different components of the project are well defined.

The main area of weakness for this logical framework is its indicators. This is for a number of reasons that affected both this project's implementation (i.e. the ability to refine or modify activities as needed) and the evaluation (i.e. the ability to know if activities were successful.) Unlike other parts of the logical framework, the indicators at the output, immediate objective and development objective were not divided into UNOPS and UNDP. Therefore it is unclear who is going to measure these indicators, if they were

applicable to both agencies, and if they were going to be measured separately or a combined joint indicator.

The indicators for the development objective, the highest level of the logical framework, were unclear and difficult to measure. These indicators were:
– Level of institutional preparedness for future electoral events in Iraq: organizational capacity to carry out electoral activities independently (Board of Commissioners, senior management, staff in various divisions and units).
– Success of future electoral events conducted by the IHEC and level of assistance required from the outside.

For the first indicator, it would have been helpful to include a specific target for what exactly was meant by "level of institutional preparedness." For example was this a quantitative result, was there a set of standards that the IECI/IHEC would be measured against, was there a qualitative or other technical benchmark? In the absence of such detail, it is difficult to measure this indicator, and it is not surprising that this indicator was not reported upon in UNOPS' progress or final reports. The second indicator would have benefitted from being broken down into two separate gauges, one of which measured the success of future electoral events (and "success" also should have been further defined) and the second to measure how external assistance was required for these events (this also could benefited from being divided into financial, technical, or other type of external assistance.)

The means of verification for both of these indicators were:
– Reports on quality of future electoral events (e.g. certification of results, electoral observer reports)
– Level of international assistance required to handle operational aspects of future electoral events.
– Independent analysis and assessment indicating an independent and effective electoral body (incl. audit reports on electoral operations).

The last two methods of verification were planned to occur after the end of this project's duration, as obviously it is impossible to measure international assistance and the quality of future electoral events before they actually occur. However, this project originally had a 12-month timeframe, and made no provision for collecting this information after the end date. Therefore there would be no method for this project to assess if it reached the development objective. The consultant understands the restrictions of working within annual project / budget cycles, and such limitations may have impacted on the design of this project. However, it is the project team's responsibility to report on all levels of the logical framework, and should only include indicators that are feasible to measure given a project's time and resources.

Similar conclusions can be made for the indicators at the immediate objective level of the logical framework. UNOPS' immediate objective had the following two indicators:
– Improved performance of IECI/IHEC staff in their respective functions at both HQ and governorate level

– Reduced dependence on international assistance during electoral operations

Both of these indicators require additional details and specific baseline in order to determine if the project was successful. It is unclear what kind of measurement "improved performance of IECI/IHEC staff in their functions" actually refers to, i.e. is this improvement based on an external assessment, on their own self-assessment, on performance evaluations from their supervisor? <u>Without specifying what this improved performance truly means, it is impossible to objectively measure the change that can be attributed to this project</u>. The second indicator, which measured the level of external assistance, has the means of verification "Number and calibre of international experts requested to support IHEC in future electoral processes." However, this fails to account for financial, operational and other forms of external assistance that electoral events in Iraq have received, and therefore is not an adequate measurement of this indicator. In addition, it is also not clear exactly when these indicators will be measured – will it be just the next electoral event, the next three events, etc. There are a number of questions that the indicators fail to address, and leave open to the subjective interpretation of whomever is measuring it. This can negatively impact both implementation and evaluation.

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

This project's monitoring system appeared to be well designed, and included a variety of means of verification to monitor and evaluate activities. However, despite the relatively strong design of the monitoring system, in reality, none of the higher levels indicators were truly monitored or measured (as discussed in further detail in question 14 above.)

In addition, each of the capacity building trainings organized by this project were supposed to be monitored and evaluated through a training report. The level of reporting for each of the capacity building activities is quite varied, with some reports providing lengthy details of the technical area of learning, and others including more details on the accommodation or quality of food served to the participants. This appeared to be determined by who / what agency was responsible for the training (i.e. IHEC, UN agency or external source.) As a result, and as mentioned throughout this report previously, the weak monitoring practice (versus the strong monitoring design) makes it is difficult to measure the outcome of this project.

In addition to a standardized reporting template as mentioned in question #12, this project would have benefitted from designated monitoring officers whose main responsibility would be to monitor the capacity building activities, as well as mentor IHEC capacity building staff on the technical skills required for scientifically valid data collection and analysis.

Reporting Requirements and Challenges

This project was one of the first multi-agency ventures funded by the UNDG ITF, and was supposed to have joint reports that complied that work of UNOPS/UNAMI (G11-14b), with UNDP/UNAMI (G11-14a). However, interviews with project staff indicate that there were problems regarding a lack of management and capacity with UNDP (particularly as the project management position for G11-14a was vacant for a long period of time) and this made it impossible to prepare complied reports.

Therefore, instead of a joint effort, donor reporting was prepared by UNOPS, who consolidated the technical data received from UNAMI regarding the capacity development activities, together with their own operational and financial data. In general, the project reports were well written and provided specific data on each of the training organized, including participants, location, training topics and other pertinent information.

VI.   Lessons and Generalizations

The following are the four lessons learned that can be gleaned from this project's evaluation and applied on a broad scale. These should be taken into consideration along with the 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: Capacity development projects should report both qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate actual achievements.

The main achievement of this project was that that 460 IECI/IHEC staff were trained in a multitude of technical and operational areas. This indeed is a significant accomplishment, as the IECI/IHEC had little to no capacity in these areas, and were able to learn new skills and knowledge as a result of these trainings. However, this quantitative figure is not enough to demonstrate that actual capacity was built in the IHEC. There was little data on the genuine change in knowledge, which could have been determined from such monitoring methodologies as comparison of pre and post tests from each training, or on the job observation before and after the trainings. Future capacity development projects should be required to have some level of qualitative measurements to better explain the quantitative indicators, and actually demonstrate the level of capacity that was developed as a result of the project. It should be noted that the UNDG ITF appeared to be satisfied with the quantitative data and the broad details provided on the trainings (i.e. number of participants, training topics, training dates and locations.) However from the donor perspective, this truly is not enough to know that the overall aims and objectives of this capacity development project were achieved.

Lesson 2: Capacity development projects should be designed for at least a two-year period, allowing adequate time for new skills and knowledge to be acquired, put into practice, and genuinely measured.

The IECI/IHEC was a new institution that would be operating in a country that had undergone massive political changes in a short period of time and had no history or experience with organizing elections. It is therefore not surprising that the capacity development needs of the IECI/IHEC were significantly large and on number of technical and institutional levels. However, building genuine capacity and changing behaviour, attitude, and practice can take years, and most likely will never be achieved in a 12-month timeframe. Therefore, future capacity development projects, especially those that aim to strengthen a large and complex institution such as the IHEC, should at least be funded for two years, if not longer. This will allow for adequate time to learn new skills as well as put them into practice (ideally through an electoral event where possible). A longer time period of implementation would also allow for better evaluation and gathering of lessons learned, as data can be collected and analyzed over a longer period of time, and actual change in capacity (if it truly happens) can be demonstrated.

Lesson 3: Partnerships between UN agencies with different technical mandates and are conducive to more efficient and timely programme implementation and management.

Interview with project staff as well as data in project reports and progress updates showed that UNOPS was able to implement all of its activities under G11-14b as per the project workplan. In addition, UNOPS also took on the implementation of some activities that were originally the responsibilities of UNDP in G11-14a. There were a number of reasons for this, and without getting into an extensive analysis, it appeared that were some difficulties in the working relationship between UNAMI and UNDP, as both agencies had technical expertise in elections and had different ideas as to how activities should be organized. This evaluation will not comment on the UNAMI/UNDP relationship. However, it is clear that the partnership between UNOPS and UNAMI was so successful because each of the agencies brought different areas of expertise to the project, and there was no overlap in technical mandate. <u>A major lesson learned is that future programmes should prioritize funding partnerships between UN agencies where there is no clear technical overlap, and a division of both responsibility and mandate</u>.

Lesson 4: Project evaluations should be conducted no later than one year after the end of implementation.

This evaluation was conducted in April 2010, almost 20 months after the project was operationally closed, and a phase two capacity building project for the IHEC was implemented (with phase three in the design stage.) A great deal of internal reflection, lessons learned and analysis went into the planning of these new projects, particularly for phase three which had the benefit an IHEC needs assessment in the autumn of 2009, and a UN assessment of IHEC needs in late 2009/early 2010. <u>It would be have been more appropriate, relevant and practically helpful if G11-14b underwent an evaluation exercise shortly after the close of activities, rather than almost two years after it ended. This would have allowed for lessons learned to be incorporated into the second and third phases in a timelier and more systematic manner, potentially ensuring that appropriate data was collected to genuinely demonstrate and gauge capacity development.</u>

Annex I: Logical Framework

Objectives	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
Development Objective			
This project is in support of the institutional development of the IECI/IHEC as a sustainable institution, operating independently, efficiently and transparently in line with professional standards.	Level of institutional preparedness for future electoral events in Iraq: organizational capacity to carry out electoral activities independently (Board of Commissioners, senior management, staff in various divisions and units). Success of future electoral events conducted by the IHEC and level of assistance required from the outside.	Reports on quality of future electoral events (e.g. certification of results, electoral observer reports) Level of international assistance required to handle operational aspects of future electoral events. Independent analysis & assessment indicating an independent and effective electoral body (incl. audit reports on electoral operations).	Project gets approval as soon as possible to allow the development objectives to be met and the project to proceed on time. No significant disruptive changes in the political or security situation in Iraq, which may impede the implementation of the project (in particular the commencement of activities in relation to new electoral processes which would prevent training participation, etc.) Close consultation and cooperation between all project partners, UNAMI/IEAT, UNDP, UNOPS, and the IECI/IHEC
Immediate Objectives: *The immediate impact on the programme/project area or target group i.e. the change or benefit to be achieved by the programme/project:*	*Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of purpose:*	*Cost-effective methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators:*	**(Immediate Objective to Development Objective)** *External conditions necessary if achieved programme/project purpose is to contribute to reaching programme/project goal:*
UNDP 1 Strengthening institutional capabilities in specifically targeted areas for the permanent electoral institution established under the constitution (implemented by UNDP)[17] **UNOPS**	Improved management skills to ensure that operational framework and policies are developed and implemented: - Strategic planning - Financial management and budgeting	Review of operational framework (incl. SOPs, financial and HR systems, etc.), e.g. through annual audit/independent evaluation Review of electoral processes	Availability of beneficiaries (e.g. trainees) and other counterparts throughout period of capacity building provision: time window will close when active operational phase for next elections starts. It is therefore essential to start project activities as soon as possible.

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[17] Programme output G2.1 of Cluster G Programme Matrix.
[18] Programme output G2.4 of Cluster G Programme Matrix.

| 2 | Improving skills of IECI/IHEC staff at HQ and Governorate Electoral offices through provision of training (implemented by UNOPS)[18] | - Human Resource management and personnel policies

Improved performance of IECI/IHEC staff in their respective functions at both HQ and governorate level

Reduced dependence on international assistance during electoral operations | (e.g. independent audit on IHEC operations)

Number and calibre of international experts requested to support IHEC in future electoral processes | Rapid and timely mobilisation and access to required resources to implement this project

Commitment of the Iraqi Government to maintaining a permanent electoral management body. Selection/ appointment of new BoC members latest in mid-May 2007.

Quality of needs assessment conducted and stability of its results (incl. level of IECI/IHEC staff retention)

Excellent working relationships between all project partners – UNAMI/IEAT, IECI/IHEC, UNDP and UNOPS

Security situation: further deterioration of the security situation could prevent participation of IECI/IHEC staff (for both in-country/on-the-job capacity building elements as well as out-of-country activities). |
| **Outputs:**
Specifically deliverable results expected from the /project to attain the objectives: | *Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed production of outputs:* | *Cost-effective methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators:* | **(Outputs to immediate objective)**
Factors out of project control which, if present, could restrict progress from outputs to achieving /project objectives: |

Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b
Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC
April 2010

32

UNDP 1.1 Improved level of IECI/IHEC management skills 1.2 Enhanced awareness of electoral best practices 1.3 Strengthened relationships with external stakeholders **UNOPS** 1.1 Improved capacity of up to 700 IECI/IHEC employees, following the delivery of training courses in the following priority areas: a)Logistics b) Procurement c) IT/Database design d) Graphic design e) Translation f) Capacity Building/Training g) Voter registration h) Security i) General skills	Assessment of baseline level and successful implementation of capacity building activities aiming at achieving a predetermined capacity level in the area of management and electoral expertise Contact with relevant partners in Iraq and abroad established and exchange of information/experience initiated Successful and timely implementation of all training activities identified through the Needs Assessment (as per Training Plan) Monitoring of project's services providers in the delivery of their contracted support	Progress reports and Final Report on the provision of capacity building support to the IECI/IHEC Supervision and monitoring by Project Team (UNDP/UNOPS) on all contracted services Feedback and reports from the IECI/IHEC and their personnel on the quality of capacity enhancing activities conducted (incl. exchange with relevant partner organizations) External evaluation and assessment reports (e.g. certifications, etc.)	Delay in access to project funds to engage necessary project personnel and initiate project activities Lack of coordination between the UN, the IECI/IHEC and other project stakeholders, including continued commitment of government to support the development of an independent electoral body Deterioration in security and political situation (e.g. travel/participation in activities) Early electoral events, preventing sufficient participation in capacity building activities
Activities: *Tasks to be done to produce the outputs*	**Inputs:** *This is a summary of the programme/project budget (sub-budgets and total as in Annex A)*	*Financial report*	**(Activity to output)** *Factors out of programme/project control which, if present, could restrict progress from activities to achieving outputs:*
UNDP Output 1.1 Improved level of IECI/IHEC management skills Activities 1.1.1 Develop management capacity of new Commissioners • Implement initial induction training package • Conduct visits to electoral commissions	UNDP Budget US\$ 1. Personnel - 419,600 2. Contracts – 822,000 3. Training – 1,586,000 4. Audit - 15,000 5. Translation Serv – 50,000 6. Supplies – 30,000 7. Travel 500,000 8. ProBtSub-tot– 3,491,052	Financial Report on Commitments and Disbursements to be provided separately by UNDP and UNOPS for the respective activities and funds received	Lack of bids with satisfactory quality received during competitive exercises and/or insufficiency of funding to contract suitable service providers Lack of cooperation from international electoral commissions to which study missions will be organized for IECI/IHEC personnel

Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b
Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC
April 2010

33

	in other jurisdictions to acquaint the Commission with different electoral systems and the functioning of an electoral commission • Conduct a visit to a country with a developed electoral system in order to raise awareness of international standards in transparency and accountability	9. Miscellaneous – 68,452 10. Security - 69,821 11. Agency Mgmt 174,553 Support (5%) **12 Total Project Budget US$3,735,426**		
1.1.2	Increase strategic and operational planning skills • Contract planning expert to provide guidance and facilitate activities which develop planning skills • Organize and/or deliver training on strategic and operational planning	<u>UNOPS Budget</u> US$ 12. Personnel - 439,200 13. Contracts – 230,600 14. Training – 1,600,000 15. Equipment - 4,500 16. Supplies - 0 17. Transport (WFP) – N/A		
1.1.3	Increase management skills in the area of financial management, budgeting and oversight • Contract an expert or consultancy firm to provide guidance on the development of appropriate financial systems and practices at HQ and governorate level • Organize and deliver training on budgeting and oversight	18. Travel 72,096 19. Pro Bt Sub-tot – 2,346,396 20. Miscellaneous – 70,000 21. Security - 45,000 22. Agency Mgmt 123,070 Support (5%) **12 Total Project Budget US$2,584,466**		
1.1.4	Increase management skills in the area of Human Resource management and personnel policies • Organize and deliver training on Human Resource best practices • Facilitate provision of guidance and advice on Human Resource administrative systems and practices, by national or international representatives, as appropriate.	**Total Project Budget (UNDP and UNOPS) US$6,319,892**		

1.1.5 Implement training package for members of middle and senior management at HQ and governorate level addressing a number of components, incl. leadership skills, time management, personnel management, organisational accountability, public relations, communication skills, etc. Output 1.2 Enhanced awareness of electoral best practices Activities 1.2.1 Complete full accreditation of two semi-accredited Bridge facilitators 1.2.2 Enable accreditation of an additional 12 facilitators 1.2.3 Organize observation and/or participation of specific sectors of IECI/IHEC staff in international elections 1.2.4 Organize relevant activities, such as training and/or work placements, to increase knowledge of voter education methodologies and best practices Output 1.3 Strengthened relationships with external stakeholders Activities 1.3.1 Organize workshop(s) with regional electoral bodies 1.3.2 Facilitate links with other Iraqi government bodies, as appropriate 1.3.3 Organize workshop(s) for IECI/IHEC and external stakeholders (such as observers, civil society organisations, political parties, media and regional electoral bodies) 1.3.4 Improve external and external relations practices by:			

1.3.5 Contracting an external relations expert to provide guidance and facilitate activities on external relations 1.3.6 Organising training as appropriate on communication and external relations for relevant staff. **UNOPS** <u>Output</u> 2.1 Improvement in capacity of up to 700 IECI/IHEC employees in 9 priority areas (UNOPS) <u>Activities</u> 2.1.1 Based on identified training needs in the Training Plan (content, trainees, timeframe), develop TORs for training providers in the various priority areas 2.1.2 Identify suitable regional training institutions/companies and experts to conduct the training courses (e.g. competitive process) 2.1.3 Contract the selected institutions/companies/experts to provide the required training 2.1.4 Provide logistics support and ensure that the necessary trainings are provided to the satisfaction of IECI/IHEC.			

Independent Evaluation of ITF Project G11-14b
Institutional Development – Organizational and HR Capacity Building for the IECI/IHEC
April 2010

36

Annex II: List of Key Informant Interviews

1. Niels Guenther, former UNOPS Deputy Director (currently UNAMI Senior Programme Coordinator)
2. Hakam Shawan, UNAMI EAT, Operations Coordinator
3. Katie Green, former UNAMI Capacity Building Team Leader (currently UNDP Iraq)
4. Sahar Ahmed, former Chief of International Training, IHEC Capacity Building, (currently Chief of Media, IHEC)
5. Shuhub Najib, former staff of the International Training department of the IHEC Capacity Building Unit (currently staff of the IHEC Electoral Registration Unit)

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 - Organisational 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 organisational 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?