[UNDG Iraq Trust Fund]

ANNUAL PROGRAMME[1] NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2009

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Programme No: F8-08 *MDTF Office Atlas No:* 71163 *Programme Title:* ***Support to the Ministry of Human Rights in Techniques for Mass Grave Excavation and Identification of Mass Graves.***	*Participating Organization(s):* UNOPS UNAMI (HRO)

Implementing Partners: • *ICMP* • MoHR	*Programme Budget (from the Fund):* 974,182 USD

Programme Duration (in months):
<u>Start date[3]</u>: 10/03/2009
<u>End date:</u> 31/07/2010
• *Original end date: 09/03/2010*
• *Revised end date:31/07/2010*
<u>Budget Revisions/Extensions:</u>
No cost extension of project duration requested 10.02.2010 and automatically granted under ITF rules for first extension requests.

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

[2] E.g. Priority Area for the Peacebuilding Fund; Thematic Window for the Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDG-F); etc.

[3] The start date is the date of the first transfer of funds from the MDTF Office as Administrative Agent.

Introduction:

The Narrative Progress Report template is in line with the UNDG Standard Progress Report.

Building on continued efforts made in the UN system to produce results-based reports, the progress report should describe how the activities (inputs) contributed to the achievement of specific short-term outputs during the twelve month reporting period, and to demonstrate how the short-term outputs achieved in the reporting period collectively contributed to the achievement of the agreed upon outcomes of the Strategic (UN) Planning Framework guiding the operations of the Fund[4].

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

The information contained in the Programme Summaries and Quarterly Updates prepared by the Participating Organizations may be useful in the preparation of the Annual Narrative Progress Report. These Summaries and Updates, where applicable, are available in the respective Fund sections of the MDTF Office GATEWAY (http://mdtf.undp.org/).

Formatting Instructions:

- The report should not exceed 10-15 pages.
- The report should be submitted in one single Word or PDF file.
- Annexes can be added to the report but need to be clearly referenced, using footnotes or endnotes within the body of the narrative.
- Do not change the Names and Numbers of the Sections below.

<u>**NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT**</u>

I. Purpose
- **Provide the main outputs and outcomes/objectives of the programme.**

The main objective of the project is to support the development of Iraq's capacity to address the large numbers of missing persons through building further capacity within MoHR to work on the excavation and examination of mass graves, including the possible exhumation of missing persons from Kuwait.

Project Outcome: The government of Iraq is better able to protect human rights in relation to the identification of missing persons.

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[4] E.g. in the case of the MDG-F, it is important to show how the programme relates to the UNDAF and how it aims to support national development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The causal links and rationale between the joint programme, the thematic window of the MDG-F and the MDGs should be clearly stated. In the case of the Peacebuilding Fund's Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF), show how the programme relates to the PBF Priority Plan's objectives. For the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, explain how the programme relates to the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq, UN MDGs, ICI, NDS, etc.

Project Outputs
1. Improved capacity of MoHR to undertake the excavation of mass graves
2. Improved capacity of MoHR to perform identification of human remains

- **Explain how the Programme relates to the Strategic (UN) Planning Framework guiding the operations of the Fund.**

The project contributes to achieving the following development goals and objectives relevant to Iraq:

UN Protection Sector Team Outcome for Iraq:
Improved protection of civilians throughout Iraq and creation of an environment which contributes to the observance of human rights for all Iraqis and mitigates the effects of forced displacement

Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS):
8.1.1. National dialogue and reconciliation
8.3 Human Rights
Goal: Uphold and protect human rights, establish the rule of law, and overcome the legacy of the recent and distant past
8.3.1 Establish a comprehensive human rights regime country wide

International Compact with Iraq (ICI):
Although there is no specific benchmark, the project addresses:
3.1.1 National dialogue and reconciliation
3.3 Uphold and protect human rights, establish the rule of law, and overcome the legacy of the recent and distant past

II. Resources
Financial Resources:
- **Provide information on other funding resources available to the project, if applicable.**

The ITF is the only source of funding for the project.

- **Provide details on any budget revisions approved by the appropriate decision-making body, if applicable.**

A no cost extension has been granted for the project. No major budget revision was necessary for the extension.

Within the project, a Memorandum of Agreement has been signed with implementing partner ICMP. The budget for the MoA amounts to USD 798,740. This budget covers the implementation of all training under the project (including, the purchase of equipment for the MoHR and ICMP personnel costs (trainers) and security and logistics costs in Iraq required to carry out the project activities.

A budget revision for the MoA was required during the reporting period, in order to adjust several budget lines. The main changes required related to increased security and logistical costs required to complete the assessments of mass grave sites in order to find a suitable site for the project excavation (see details below). This in turn impacted on the lines for equipment, which had to be

reduced in terms of quantity per item to allow for the other line increases. The reduction of quantity did not have an impact for the implementation of the project, for which part of the equipment was used during the project activities. The overall budget for the MoA was not changed.

- Provide information on good practices and constraints in the mechanics of the financial process, times to get transfers, identification of potential bottlenecks, need for better coordination, etc.

In general, the financial process with the UNDG-ITF is very well managed as funds for newly approved projects are transferred in a few days after the official signature of the Project Document. There are no real bottlenecks and currently budget revisions are processed quickly. Moreover, the financial reporting on an annual basis facilitated the process compared to the previous practice of semiannual financial reporting. The on line reporting portal used for financial reporting of all the Multi Donor Trust Fund projects also helped improve the quality of reporting.

Human Resources:
- **National Staff: Provide details on the number and type (operation/programme).**

UNOPS is responsible for the overall management of the project and as such has the following staffing:

1 full-time National Project Associate is assigned to manage the day to day project activities and follow up on administrative requirements as well as contracting the service provider, monitoring and preparing Financial Proposals together with Financial Progress Statements and Final Reports.

1 part-time National Finance Officer (30%) is responsible for overseeing the Financial Analysis, the Review of Invoices and the Processing of Payments.

UNOPS field staff, although not directly linked to the project, may provide in country support on occasion as is necessary,

- **International Staff: Provide details on the number and type (operation/programme)**

1 International Project Manager (part time 30%) has the responsibility for overseeing the overall management of the project in addition to preparing the stipulated financial and narrative reports.

III. Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements
- **Summarize the implementation mechanisms primarily utilized and how they are adapted to achieve maximum impact given the operating context.**

UNOPS is responsible for all contracting, procurement oversight and other operations related to the management of the project. UNAMI HRO plays a technical advisory role for the implementation of the project and facilitates coordination with the MoHR, the line ministry for the project. The main project activities are implemented through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), an international NGO specialised in the identification of missing persons, mass grave excavation and forensic analysis. ICMP is responsible for carrying out all training and procurement activities linked to the project outputs.

ICMP's expertise in this specialist area combined with experience in post conflict situations (such as the Balkans) allows the NGO to operate effectively in the challenging context of Iraq.

- **Provide details on the procurement procedures utilized and explain variances in standard procedures.**

ICMP was contracted as an implementing partner under an MoA following UNOPS procurement procedures. Specifically, the organisation was contracted as a pre-selected partner (under paragraph 4.4.2 of UNOPS procurement manual 2007) chosen by UNAMI HRO as UNOPS client. ICMP's partnership was detailed in the project document submitted to ITF and they participated in the project development process, providing technical expertise for the project design.

As implementing partner, ICMP is responsible for the procurement of specialist excavation and forensic analysis equipment under the project. According to their MoA with UNOPS, ICMP is required to ensure that fair and transparent procurement procedures that promote free competition are followed. In addition, for all items purchased above 2500 USD ICMP must produce bidding documents showing that a minimum of 3 offers were received for the item concerned.

- **Provide details on the monitoring system(s) that are being used and how you identify and incorporate lessons learned into the ongoing project.**

Monitoring of the project is carried out using a number of methods. UNOPS closely follows all contractual obligations and works to ensure that all project outputs are achieved. To do this, regular written and oral communication between the UNOPS project manager, UNAMI HRO and ICMP is used to follow up on project activities.

Following some communication concerns with ICMP in the early stages of the project, (resulting from a high staff turnover at the ICMP Iraq office) the project implemented a process of regular meetings and fortnightly updates from ICMP on activity progress in order to improve information flow and monitoring capacity.

In addition to reporting and correspondence, UNOPS field staff based in Iraq also provide monitoring support for the project by regularly attending project activities and providing feedback to the project manager in Amman.

UNAMI HRO, in its advisory role, coordinates with MoHR and ensures monitoring and follow up of any issues at the political level that may impact on the project implementation Any issues raised are relayed to the UNOPS project manager for relevant action to be taken.

- **Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken.**

Not applicable

IV. Results
- **Provide a summary of Programme progress in relation to planned outcomes and outputs; explain any variance in achieved versus planned outputs during the reporting period.**

The project concentrates on building the capacity of an additional MoHR team dealing with forensic exhumation, with the objective of facilitating more effective identification and exhumation of missing persons. Specifically, the project is training a team of forensic experts that will work for the MoHR. In addition, the project is procuring equipment, including specialist technical items, to be given to the MoHR upon completion of the training.

Under output 1.1, improved capacity of MoHR to undertake the excavation of mass graves, the following activities are planned within the project timeframe:
1. Identification of trainees
2. Conducting of theoretical training on forensic archaeology/digital survey, data base management, forensic anthropology and pathology
3. Procurement of specialist excavation equipment to be handed over to the MoHR
4. Conducting site assessment including electronic survey mapping
5. Site recording
6. Excavation of a selected mass grave site (practical application of acquired skills)

Under output 1.2, improved capacity of MoHR to perform identification of human remains, the following activities are planned within the project timeframe:
7. Examination of remains, carrying out analysis procedures and collating results and report drafting (Practical application of skills in acquired in data analysis)
8. Electronic survey data collection
9. Ante mortem data collection

In the reporting period, all activities planned under output 1.1 were completed (detailed in the next section). In addition, part of the activities under output 1.2 began in December 2009.

It should be noted here that some changes were made to survey and mapping activities following a decision by ICMP to concentrate on increasing trainee capacity in traditional or non electronic survey techniques as opposed to also teaching more complex electronic techniques. This decision was made based on the capacity of participants at the time of the theoretical training. Nevertheless, participants were given a basic overview of electronic equipment used in site surveying and it is expected that participants will undergo further, more in depth training on electronic survey tools during the activities related to output 1.2. The overall activity target of completing a site assessment under output was still met.

The project is progressing well and is meeting its outputs; however, there has been an overall delay in the implementation timetable, in particular in relation to output 1.2, which was originally expected to have been completed in 2009. (The reasons for delay are detailed below). A revised schedule has been agreed with the implementing partner and the project end date has been extended to July 2010 in order to complete the final activities. The extension takes into account potential delays during the election period in March 2010.

- **Report on the key outputs achieved in the reporting period including # and nature of the activities (inputs), % of completion and beneficiaries.**

96.2% of planned activities under output 1.1 were completed during the reporting period. The remaining 3.8% (weighted) represents the final handover of equipment to the MoHR, which has not yet been completed and will now take place in early 2010.

Output 1.1: Improved capacity of MoHR to undertake the excavation of mass graves:

Selection of Training Participants:

In June 2009, ICMP conducted a selection process for MoHR candidates for the project training to ensure a high quality of trainees. A limited number of available and qualified candidates meant that the target number of beneficiaries, originally 25, had to be revised. Finally 22 candidates were selected, 15 from MoHR and 7 trainees from MLI. 7 of the selected beneficiaries were women.

Theoretical Training:

In August 2009, ICMP completed the first phase of the project's training activities with a 5 week training course on "Techniques and Methods in the Excavation and Examination of Human Remains from Mass Graves" for the 22 participants. The course included classroom based theoretical and practical training as well as simulation exercises on mock grave sites. The training covered search and location of mass graves, survey, excavation techniques, skeletal anatomy and determination of age and sex and movement (e.g. from the grave site to a mortuary setting or storage facility) and control of evidence.

Procurement of Excavation Equipment:

In addition to the training component of the project, specialist excavation equipment is being procured by ICMP for the MoHR. By December 2009, the majority of the equipment had been purchased, achieving 75% of the target indicator for this activity. Specialist items such as autopsy equipment, specialist software, mapping and telescopic equipment were sourced internationally and are being shipped to Iraq. A large amount of excavation equipment, including hand tools and storage materials, was bought locally in Iraq. Part of the equipment purchased was used during the training by participants.

The handover of equipment to the MoHR was expected to take place in December 2009; however ICMP experienced some delays in shipping internationally procured items to Iraq. The handover is now expected to take place in early 2010, with approximately 3 months of delay. All equipment purchased has been checked for adaptability to the hot climate in Iraq and the related requirements for storage and examination of mortal remains.

Site Assessment and Recording:

As part of the project, implementing partner ICMP in cooperation with the MoHR has undertaken several site assessments of potential mass grave sites. These assessments were used to locate a suitable site for an excavation to be carried out by experts trained under the project.

A number of site assessments had to be conducted before a suitable site was found for the project excavation (assessments were done with MoHR in Basra, Al Radwaniya, Karballa and Mahari.). This was because in some cases site assessments showed either that security was insufficient for excavation staff to work in certain areas or that the correct logistical facilities, such as mortuary capacity, were not available. In addition, for some sites assessed, it was not possible to obtain the relevant legal permissions for excavating within the project time frame.

It should also be noted here that time was spent assessing a number of sites thought to contain the remains of missing Kuwaiti prisoners of war, in particular Basra and Karballa. In the case of Basra, the site could not be excavated due to poor security conditions and in the case of Karballa, the required legal permissions could not be obtained within the timeframe allocated for the excavation activity under this project.

The assessments played an important role in the preparations for the excavation activity, for which a site was eventually selected near at Tob Zawah near Kirkuk:

The site at Tob Zawah was assessed and documented by the MoHR between 22nd October and 6th November. Their assessment concluded that there were three separate small mass graves at the site suitable for excavation: two within close proximity to one another, and one approximately 1km away. This information was confirmed in an ICMP assessment on 9th November which looked at the security situation of the site for excavation and deemed it safe to work at in order to complete the second phase of the training which comprised of the practical application of acquired skills during an exhumation.

The Tob Zawah site is close to Kirkuk, in a largely Kurdish area. It is close to a former military camp that was operational under the regime of Saddam Hussein. It functioned as a temporary prison facility. The assessment considered it possible that the missing persons at site could be from the camp and might also be of Kurdish origin.

Excavation of a Mass Grave Site:

Following the assessment, the excavation of the site was carried out from 7th to 17th December 2009 under the leadership of the MoHR and authorized by the Kirkuk Court. It was decided that only the two grave sites within close proximity to each other would be excavated under the project. This was decided because the third site had been disturbed by agricultural work and was therefore not suitable for the practical training exercise that needed to be carried out. UNOPS has not been informed as to whether the third site will be investigated at a later stage by MoHR.

Alongside MoHR, members of staff from ICMP and the MLI were granted access to the site for the excavation. The Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs (MoMAA) was also onsite from the 9th December to observe the excavation.

For the purposes of the project, at least one mass grave site needed to be excavated to meet the project target of practical training in the setting of a real mass grave. The target indicator for this activity was therefore reached 100%. All 22 training participants participated in the excavation as part of the second phase of their training.

During the excavation some capacity weaknesses in the areas of site set up and management were identified by ICMP and further training in these areas has been recommended, although not under this project. In particular, the division of the excavation staff into two teams working on the two different areas within the site led to an imbalance in expertise between the two areas. This in turn led to weaknesses in excavation techniques, particularly in relation to procedures for surveying of evidence, which were not always complied with fully.

In addition, on the first day of the excavation, large public interest resulted in the presence of over 120 people at the site, including media representatives. Better site management techniques would have allowed this situation to be dealt with in a more effective manner, in particular by ensuring that an acceptable distance was kept between onlookers and the excavation site. At times, this was not the case during the first day of excavation. It was also noted that the excavation team faced difficulties in managing media presence and would benefit from training on how to give information and manage the media during an exhumation process.

Output 1.2: Improved capacity of MoHR to perform identification of human remains

The majority of activities for this output are yet to be completed and include training on analysis of remains in a mortuary setting, data recording and management and reporting. This component is expected to be finished in 2010. However, as part of the excavation phase, some initial activities related to this output were completed, relating to 42% of the output as a whole:

Analysis of Remains:

Forensic evidence and human remains exhumed at the Tob Zawah site were classified during the excavation as part of the training on identification and analysis of remains. Remains and all other items recovered were documented by archaeologists and anthropologists and a detailed record of all evidence from the site is now held by the MoHR in Baghdad. According to MoHR sources, DNA samples were also taken before the remains were moved to a mortuary at Azadi hospital in the Kirkuk governorate for further forensic analysis at a later stage.

- **Explain, if relevant, delays in programme implementation, the nature of the constraints, actions taken to mitigate future delays and lessons learned in the process.**

In the first phase of the project, some delays were experienced in implementing the theoretical training. The training was expected to take place in mid June 2009. However, due to of the time required to complete the selection process to find qualified participants, including CV review and interviews, this date was not possible to meet. The selection process also took longer than originally expected as only a limited number of qualified candidates were available. The training eventually took place from 2nd August to 2nd September 2009.

The excavation of a mass grave site under the project was also delayed by the need to assess several sites prior to finding a suitable site for the project excavation (detailed above). Each site assessment was undertaken in full cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. Some delays relating to legal permissions and obtaining the correct paperwork were faced during the assessments and, as a lesson learnt it would be advisable to allocate more time for such eventualities in future projects. It should be noted here that the project considered the possibility of excavating a site containing the remains of Kuwaiti missing persons and some time was taken to look into this possibility during the site selection. It was however concluded that the excavation of such a site would not be feasible within the timeframe of this project, although the MoHR continues to look into the issue of Kuwaiti graves separately.

Delays were also experienced in the procurement of excavation equipment for the MoHR. The delays were caused by the need to reassess the types of equipment required once it became clear that certain items listed for purchase would not be suitable for the climatic conditions in Iraq. In addition, many items had to be sourced outside of Iraq, leading to delays caused by shipment and customs clearance constraints. Experience gained of Iraq specific requirements for excavation equipment during the project is a lesson learned for future projects.

- **List the key partnerships and collaborations, and explain how such relationships impact on the achievement of results.**

The project is managed by UNOPS in close cooperation with UNAMI HRO. MoHR is the line ministry for the project and a close working relationship has been built up between the ministry, UNAMI HRO and UNOPS throughout the project as well as during other projects involving the same partnerships. This relationship has strengthened cooperation between the three parties for the

implementation of the project activities. Communication and regular information sharing help support the partnership.

In addition, the project's main implementing partner is ICMP. This partnership has needed strengthening during the project, in particular following high staff turnover at ICMP in the early stages of the project, which resulted in some communication problems between ICMP and UNOPS. A number of meetings and conference calls were held and regular reporting instigated in order to improve the working relationship and ensure project outputs are achieved. ICMP has since appointed a new head of programmes for Iraq and the partnership is currently working well.

- **Other highlights and cross-cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on.**

Human Rights: The project is directly related to human rights, specifically the issue of missing persons. It is working to ensure that capacity is available in the country for the proper and respectful exhumation of mass graves sites and identification of victims, through the training of an additional team of forensic experts within the MoHR. So far, the team has successfully completed two out of three phases of training planned under the project.

Gender: The project has actively encouraged the participation of qualified women in its activities. Although the majority of applicants for the project's training were men, out of 22 participants selected, 7 were women (32%).

Employment: This project will lead to the employment by the MoHR of an additional team of 22 forensic experts who will work on the excavation and examination of mass graves. The 22 experts are currently completing the training that will allow for their employment within the MoHR.

Environment: Environmental health issues related to the excavation of mass graves have been dealt with in the training of experts to address potential health issues during the exhumation process. During the theoretical training received in August, components on health and safety in the field and health and safety in the mortuary were covered.

Security: Security at mass grave sites and in particular mine awareness is a key component of the theoretical and practical training received by the forensic experts so far.

V. Future Work Plan (if applicable)

The project has been extended until 31st July 2010 in order to complete all project activities. While the timetable for completion has been extended, the outputs and targets remain the same.

The following activities will be completed between January and July 2010.

- Handover of all equipment to the MoHR
- Examination of remains, carrying out analysis procedures and collating results and report drafting (Practical application of skills in acquired in data analysis)
- Electronic survey data collection (practical training)
- Ante mortem data collection (practical training)

VI. Performance Indicators (optional)[5]

- See table below

VII. Abbreviations and Acronyms

- List the main abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report.

UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services
UNAMI HRO: United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human rights Office
ICMP: International Commission on Missing Persons
MoHR: Ministry of Human Rights
MLI: Medical Legal Institute
MoMAA: Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs
MoA: Memorandum of Agreement
ICI: International Compact with Iraq
NDS: Iraqi National Development Strategy
POT: Protection Outcome Team

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[5] E.g. for the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund and the MDG-F.

I. Performance Indicators assessment

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Means of Verification	Comments (if any)
IP Outcome 1						
IP Output 1.1 Improved capacity of MoHR to undertake the excavation of mass graves	Indicator 1.1.1	# of MoHR officials trained on excavation of mass graves	25	22	Training reports	Due to the limited number of suitably qualified candidates available in Iraq, only 22 participants were selected.
	Indicator 1.1.2	# of mass grave sites identified using electronic survey mapping	To be determined subject to assessment	5	Project progress report	A number of sites were assessed for excavation, but only one site was excavated as part of the project. The other sites assessed either lacked legal permissions for excavation or could not be worked on due to the security situation. In addition, following a decision by the training experts, attention was focused on non electronic survey means because of a need to build further capacity prior to introducing complex electronic equipment (see details in report)
	Indicator 1.1.3	# of mass graves excavated	To be determined based on survey	1	Project progress report	Only one site was needed in order to complete the practical aspect of the training received under the project.
	Indicator 1.1.4	Equipment to support	As identified	75% of identified	Inventory of Equipment	

		excavation	by ICMP and MoHR	equipment procured		
IP Output 1.2 Improved capacity of MoHR to perform identification of human remains	Indicator 1.2.1	# of human remains examined	To be determined based on results of excavation		Project progress report	Not yet fully implemented
	Indicator 1.2.2	# data collected /classified	To be determined based on results of excavation		Data Base	Not yet fully implemented