

**Final Report on the
Environmental NGO Roundtable
(Amman, Jordan, Sept 24-26, 2005)**



October 15, 2005

I. Summary

The following is a final report on the Environmental NGO Roundtable. The Roundtable was project of Nature-Iraq with funding from the UN Civil Society Project/UNOPS. It represents the first attempt that we are aware of to provide training specifically for environmental groups in Iraq, many of them newly formed since the war in 2003. The project included doing a survey of the environmental NGO community in Iraq and bringing a selection of these groups to Amman, Jordan for the Environmental Health in Post-War Iraq Conference (19-22 Sep) and to invite them as well as regional environmental groups to participate in a Roundtable meeting and training (24-26 Sep) following the conference.

The goal of the project was to expose the members of these new Iraqi organizations to their peers and colleagues from related organizations in the region; provide some basic training; help build partnerships, and develop a needs assessment of the Iraqi environmental NGO community and a list of recommendations for their future support. Iraqi groups were selected from northern, southern & central Iraq on the basis of the survey of known Iraqi environmental organizations (See Appendix A). Although only twelve groups were selected for this project, there were many other organizations on our list that we believe were equally worthy of invitation but were simply excluded for logistical and funding reasons.

This document includes:

- Section II: Recommendations & Results of the Roundtable
- Section III: A review of the survey results and the organizations who attended
- Section IV: The evaluation by the participants
- Section V: Organizers Evaluation

Also included are the following appendices.

- Appendix A lists the Environmental Organizations of Iraq
- Appendix B lists the final program schedule.
- Appendix C lists the full information for the evaluation surveys.

II. Recommendations & Results

Though all the Iraqi NGO's are seeking funding and list that as a major need, the primary recommendations made by all participants, both Iraqi & Regional, were focused on the need for additional training. Training needs were listed in four major categories in this order of priority:

- 1) Strategic Planning,
- 2) Administration/Management Skills,
- 3) Capacity Building for environmental impact assessments/evaluations,
- 4) Advocacy Skills

These central training needs were refined from the following list: strategic planning, writing project proposals, planning for projects, management of environmental resources, presentation skills, capacity building for environmental impact evaluations, fundraising, how to do surveys & statistics, building partnerships, soft skills, determination of indicators, international environmental agreements, formation of lobbying groups, management of NGO's, preparing a budget, and networking. Additional training needs listed on evaluation sheets included: financial reports, public awareness & education, scientific research on pollution issues

An important result of the Roundtable was the agreement by the participants to create a Regional Environmental Forum to develop future information sharing, cooperation and support between all the environmental NGO's in the region. Yasser Al Mohammad of Environmental Protection & Sustainable Development Society (Syria) agreed to be the focal point for the Forum and to call and organize a meeting within six (6) months time in Damascus, Syria. Yasser's contact information is: +963 114461221 (Tel) & env-pro@mail.sy or yasser-m@scs-net.org

III. Survey Results & Information on the Iraqi Groups who attended the Roundtable

We currently have a list of 37 Iraqi Environmental NGOs (See Appendix A). We have completed surveys for nineteen groups and are expecting additional evaluations to be returned soon.

The following is a list of the groups who attend the Environmental NGO Roundtable:

Iraqi Groups*

Iraqi Woman's Charitable Association- IWCA (Basra)
Iraqi National Association for Human Right-Babylon (Hilla)
Iraqi Greenpeace Association (Basra)
Iraqi Greenpeace Organization (Baghdad)
Conservation Center of Environment & Reserve (Baghdad, Fallujah)
National Association for Iraqi Environment Woman & Environment Organization (Baghdad)
Afyaa Assembly for Environment & Heritage Protection (Kut)
Green Peace Organization of Kurdistan (Erbil)
Iraq Society for Sustainable Development (Baghdad)
Together to Protect Humans and the Environment (Baghdad)
Chibayish Marshes Council (Nasiria)

Regional Groups

Al Aydat Society (Syria)
Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (Jordan)
Friends of the Earth - Middle East (Jordan)
Jordan Environment Society
Jordan Heritage Development Society
Envirotech
Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (Jordan)
Greenpeace Mediterranean (Int'l based in Lebanon)
Environmental Protection & Sustainable Development Society (Syria)
Syrian Society for Wildlife Conservation
Via Nova Group

*Green Kurdistan Society & the Iraqi Environmental Health Centers had to cancel at the last minute. Iraqi Greenpeace Association of Basra and the National Association for Iraqi Environment replaced them.

During the Roundtable, each group gave a project presentation where they discussed the environmental work they do in Iraq. Appendix A includes a summary based on these presentation and information from their completed surveys.

IV. Evaluation

Iraqi & Regional Environmental groups filled out a short evaluation sheet on the Roundtable. Iraqi groups were asked to rate the presentations on a 1 to 5 scale and the results of their evaluations as well as text responses to evaluation questions from the Iraqis are included in Appendix C.

Regional NGO's were given a different evaluation form that asked them to evaluate the Panel Presentations, the Iraqi Project Presentations, the Field Trip and to provide a general critique of the Iraqi Environmental groups that were present. Their complete responses are also listed in Appendix C.

In general, all the evaluation forms (from both Iraqis and regional environmental organizations) suggest more in-depth training is needed for the Iraqi organizations.

Here is a sampling of some comments from the discussions during the event itself:

Comments by Iraqi NGO's

- "We are a world to ourselves because we've been disconnected."
- "New groups have no history, so donors discount us"
- "Our biggest problems are- Security, No Funding, and Lack of cooperation between NGO's & Government"
- "Decision-makers do not have any environmental awareness, so there is a lack of monitoring, a lack of interest."
- "How long does it take to establish credibility?"
- "Funds from the government may turn you into a political partner"
- "Training is focused in Baghdad alone ... not to the regions and not always to people in their proper fields"
- "Government people are not motivated; they go to trainings for the per diems."
- "What the Iraqi Ministry of Environment wants from NGO's is to take ideas from them and then do it themselves"
- "How can there be funding to train Iraqis on the environment and not a single Iraqi environmental NGO gets invited?"

Comments by Regional NGO's

- "We can't compare ourselves to Iraq. We don't have a catastrophe"
- "As Civil Society, you can work with both government and private sector. NGO's are dynamic and don't get tied up in state bureaucracy."
- "Decision-makers are not against the environment, they just lack awareness. Enhance the dialogue between government & NGO's. We can't succeed if the government works against us. If they don't respond to us, talk to them through the mass media."
- "Everything is a priority, but you need to specialize into different areas"
- "Why are your NGO activities so varied? This looks like you don't have focus and it looks strange to donors. First you tell me that you do health classes and then constitution classes and then you tell me you focus on water. The work on the environment is very wide, but we have to focus and determine exactly what we are doing."
- "We were talking about searching the internet for information on funding and one of the [Iraqi] NGO's said, 'How do you search the internet?' ... They are asking the most basic questions."

Much of the discussion during the Roundtable centered on the issues of training, funding and the challenges that NGO's face in trying to work with the Iraqi government.

V. Organizer's Evaluation

Environmental Health Conference: The Stony Brook Environmental Health conference was attended by 200 to 300 health professionals and the majority of the NGO's invited from Iraq gave me positive feedback and felt that attending the conference had been informative and a good opportunity for them to network. The only drawback was that the conference was conducted primarily in English and was sometimes overly technical for some of the NGO's.

Roundtable: I felt that the regional NGO's presentations were by and large very good but sometimes they tended to be more focused on providing a general overview of their organization and did not stick very closely to the presentation topic. I did spend some significant time trying to convey the purpose of the presentation and let them know what I was looking for. A few of the presenters only came for their presentations and then left soon afterwards, which I tried to discourage as I wanted them to be present during the discussions and the Iraqi presentations. By and large I was pleased with the Iraqi presentations, though I agree with many of the comments given by the regional NGO's in their evaluations (See Appendix C) and it appears that several of the NGO's are in need of the most basic training (computer skills, internet skills, etc.). The facilitation offered by Via Nova was highly professional. The Field Trip sites were very good but there are other options for future such trips (visiting actual project sites of different regional NGO's ... i.e. Bio-gas site of JES)

Responsiveness of Regional NGO's: I was not able to locate good NGO's in Turkey, Iran or Saudi Arabia. I had some contact with a Kuwaiti group (Kuwait Environmental Protection Society) but they seemed uninterested in the project and very unresponsive.

Appendix A: Iraqi Environmental NGO List (10/2005)

Attended Roundtable	Org Name	Email Name	EmailName2
Yes	Afyaa Assembly for Environment & Heritage Protection	goodness_horizon@yahoo.com	
No	Arab Water Treatment Center	info@iraqwatertreatment.com	
No	Association To Protect Environment in Al Najaf	Ali-kain2003@yahoo.com	
No	Belad Between Two Rivers to Protect Environment	latefa_alanher@yahoo.com or >	latefa_alnahr@yahoo.com
Yes	Chibayish Marshes Council	marshes_chibayish@yahoo.com	
Yes	Conservation Center of Environment & Reserve	cceerfaluja@yahoo.com	muhamadt@gmail.com, muhtaq72@yahoo.com
No	Conservation of Genetic & Environmental Resources Organization (aka Nature Projects)	nature_projects@yahoo.com	
No	Democratic Green Party	Rasool6@maktoob.com	
No	Environment Protection Society in Thi-Qar	ahmsam@hotmail.com	
No	Environmental Health Centers of Iraq	drriyadh_26@yahoo.com	
No	General Society for Human Rights in Basra (Env't Committee)	nasirhul58@yahoo.com	
No	General Society of Human Rights -Basrah	Nasirhul58@yahoo.com	
No	Green Iraq Organization	greeniraq@yahoo.com	
No	Green Kurdistan Society	araratgks99@yahoo.com	
Yes	Green Peace Organization of Kurdistan	halabja_2006@yahoo.com	
No	Green Peace Volunteers	Tigpho2003@yahoo.com	
Yes	Iraq Society for Sustainable Development (ISSD)	dh_azawi@yahoo.com	
No	Iraqi Environmental Protection Association (Univ of Babylon)	alaaalrubai77@yhao.com	eyad_Leber@yahoo.com
No	Iraqi Environmental Protection Association (Univ of Baghdad)	fikrat_hassan@yahoo.com	
No	Iraqi Green Movement	iraqigm@yahoo.com	
Yes	Iraqi Green Peace Assoc. (IGPA)	marashi_1945@yahoo.com	
Yes	Iraqi Greenpeace Organization	iraqigpo@yahoo.com	
Yes	Iraqi National Assoc. for Human Right (Babylon)	humanright_babylon@yahoo.com	
No	Iraqi Nature Conservation Society (INCS)	incs_org@yahoo.com	
Yes	Iraqi Woman's Charitable Association (IWCA)	azharalsaboonchi@yahoo.com	www.geocities.com/azharalsaboonchi/index.html
No	Martyr's (Al Shaheed) Humanity Organization	alizamam@yahoo.com.	
No	Nat'l Assoc. for Iraqi Environment /Babylon	Athir-iepa@yahoo.com,	Ehssan_zah@yahoo.com
Yes	Nat'l Society for Iraqi Environment	iraq_environment@yahoo.com	
No	Nat'l Assoc. for the Defense of the Env't & Child	Environment-child@gawab.com	
Yes	Nature Iraq	aazzam@iraqfoundation.org	bachmanna@gmail.com
No	Org. of Env't and Forests Protection and Improvement	hazimshark@yahoo.com	
No	Org. of Protection and Improving the Iraqi Env't	olip@hotmail.com	mm-alaqee@yahoo.com
No	Purity Association for Environment Protection	naqa_naqa@yahoo.com	
No	REACH Organization	vian_dana@hotmail.com	
Yes	Together to Protect Humans and the Env't	saadiafalsalhy@yahoo.com	togetherhuman@yahoo.com
No	Water Reservation Association	wra@yahoo.com	
Yes	Woman & Environment Organization	ministermoumin@yahoo.com,mishkat moumin@hotmail.com	

Appendix B: Final Agenda of the Environmental NGO Roundtable Schedule

Facilitator – Via Nova Group (Rana Al-Akhal)

Saturday, 24 Sept	Sunday, 25 Sept	Monday, 26 Sept
9 to 10 AM Introductions, Goals (All groups)	9 to 10:30 AM Fundraising Envirotech (Jordan) – (Adnan Budieri)	8:45 AM Meet at Toledo Hotel for Site Visits
10 to 11:30 AM Organizational Structure & Project Planning Jordan Heritage Development Society – (Nofa Nasser) Greenpeace Mediterranean (Jordan) – (Hassan Chahine)	10:30 to 10:45 AM Break	9 AM to 10:30 AM Jordan Environment Society Site Visit
11:30 to 11:45 AM Break	10:45 to 12:15 PM Training Jordan Environment Society [JES] – (Abdusalam Kamal) Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development – (Faisal Al Qura'an)	10:45 to 12:30 AM Wild Jordan Center Site Visit
11:45 to 12:30 PM Iraqi Project Presentations** 1. Conservation Center & Reserve 2. Iraqi Women's Charitable Association 3. Greenpeace Kurdistan	12:15 to 1:30 PM Iraqi Project Presentations** 1. Green Peace Association of Basra 2. Nat'l Association for Iraqi Env't 3. Women & Environment Organization	12:30 to 2:00 PM Drive to Nature Reserve
12:30 to 1:15 PM Feedback & Discussion	1:30 to 2:30 PM Lunch	2:00 PM to 3:30 PM Lunch at Ajloun Reserve
1:15 to 2:30 PM Lunch	2:30 to 3:15 PM Iraqi Project Presentations** 1. Iraqi Greenpeace Organization 2. National Association for Human Rights 3. Afyaa Assembly for Env't & Heritage Protection	3:30 PM Presentation & Tour by Reserve Staff of Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
2:30 to 3:15 PM Iraqi Project Presentations** 1. Iraq Society for Sustainable Development 2. Together to Protect Humans & the Env't 3. Chabayish Marsh Council	3:15 to 4 PM Feedback & Discussion	5:30 to 7:00 PM Drive back to Amman
3:15 to 4 PM Feedback & Discussion	4 to 4:15 PM Break	
4 to 4:15 PM Break	4:15 to 5:45 PM Public Awareness & Education Jordan Environment Society [JES] – (Abdusalam Kamal) Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (Jordan) – (Abdul Al Razaq) Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon – (Sawsan Mehdi)	
4:15 to 5:45 PM Relationships between NGO's & Government Friends of the Earth – Middle East (Jordan) – (Munqeth Mehwar) Jordan Heritage Development Society – (Nofa Nasser) Environmental Protection & Sustainable Development Society (Syria) – (Yasser Al Mohammed)	6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Regional Environmental Network All	<i>**Iraqi Project Presentations – Iraqi representatives are asked to make a 10 minute presentation on a project that they either have done or plan to do in the future. This is an opportunity for groups to share ideas and get feedback from their colleagues in Iraq and in the region on their projects.</i>
6:00 to 6:30 PM Optional Session on Biodiversity Project (Nature-Iraq)		

Appendix C: Full Evaluation

EVALUATION – Iraqi Groups (FROM 13 INDIVIDUALS) Environmental NGO Roundtable - Sept 24-26, 2005

1. Organizational Structure & Project Planning - الهيكلية التنظيمية, تطوير المشاريع - Comments:

- We didn't dialogue about how to determine environmental problems to planning the proposal and information about structure is not enough.
- It was concentrated on project planning

2. Relationships between NGO's & Government - العلاقة بين المنظمات البيئية غير الحكومية والهيئات الحكومية - Comments:

- Don't find discussing of current problems and solutions with the Iraqi Government
- It was very good lectures

3. Fundraising - زيادة التمويل - Comments:

- Didn't find anything about how to write a proposal to get funding.
- It was good enough

4. Training - تدريب - Comments:

- It was fair and need improvement

5. Public Awareness & Education - التوعية العامة والتعليم - Comments:

- It was very good

Field Trip - Comments:

- Very good and diversified
- There are some things not covered during the tour in the Reserve

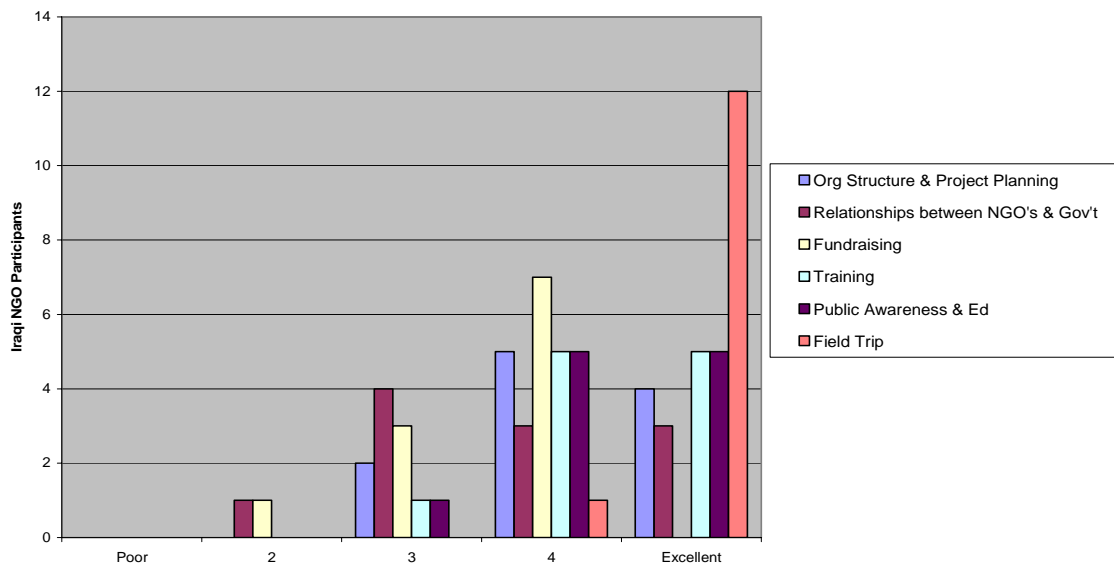
How could the training be improved?

- After I see all experiences of another NGO's I will plan to make some projects to develop the environmental situation in my city (Fallujah) and increase the relations with all sides in civil society and government or universities.
- By doing practical training for NGO's more than sessions and concentrating on strategic planning and project proposals

In what areas would you like future training?

Strategic planning (11), Fundraising (10), training/capacity building (2), administration (1), financial reports (1)
Public Awareness & Ed (1), Scientific research about Pollution (1), networking (1), & project proposals (1)

Evaluation of Workshops



**EVALUATION – Regional Groups (FROM 7 INDIVIDUALS)
Environmental NGO Roundtable - Sept 24-26, 2005**

1. Panel Presentations (Organizational Structure & Project Planning, Relationship between NGO's & Government, Fundraising, Training, Public Awareness & Education)

Do you think the workshops were effective (provided the groups with the information they needed)?

- Yes, they all were very effective and essential, especially for the Iraqi people since they are new to NGO Work and are not accessible to international donors and experts and/or otherwise.
- Yes, but we still need a copy from all the presented papers
- Yes
- Yes, with the available time
- Yes
- Very effective

How could the panel presentations be improved?

- Although the main themes were very interesting, yet the time allocated was very tight. In my opinion, I believe for the next time you could present fewer themes yet more information about each theme and especially for the Iraqi NGO's since they need a lot of information and they lack resources to implement their mission to its utmost. Further they lack basic communication skills, soft skills, researching skills, management skills, etc. Further I would recommend to have a second roundtable that has less themes yet more condensed information because this roundtable was very superficial
- By having more meetings and more contacts
- Be more focused on the topics of the session for example, there could be an outline or list of guiding questions.
- By orienting further the speakers on the content of the presentations (to reflect the needs/ideas needed for the target beneficiaries) i.e. To provide the speakers with clear objectives of the conference and a sort of template presentation to be followed by speakers
- More training to some NGO's from Iraq & Syria

Other comment about the panels?

- To have participation of our surrounding countries on the regional level
- Time was tight
- Need more time to be given to discussion and debate
- Conference facilities should be bigger to enable better presentations
- Very constructive, good team spirit

2. Iraqi Project Presentations

Did you learn anything that surprised you from the presentations made by the Iraqi groups?

- Definitely. The amount of work they have to do and the amount of patience they require to see any output
- Yes
- Yes, they lack focus and they need a lot of technical and financial support in order to be well-established
- Yes, the environmental state in Iraq, in general
- NGO's newly established
- The environmental situation
- I have learned from the Lebanese participation since it's the only presentation I attended

(Continued on the next page)

Regional Group Evaluations (Continued)

In general, do you think the groups gave effective presentations? (i.e. did they convey the mission and essential work of the group adequately?)

- Yes, but it all depended on reading between the lines yet it was not direct and simple & straight forward. That's why they need skills to be able to convince/market their organizations and implement their missions.
- They need more background and more training in their country and other countries
- In most of them
- Partially, yes, some did not, improve presentation skills
- They need more work
- The Iraqi NGO's need more training on presentation skills

3. Field Trip (if you participated)

Were the site locations appropriate for this type of training?

- JES/Wild Jordan
- Yes

Can you suggest alternative sites to be visited or alternative activities?

- I suggest to visit factories related to our issue and see life in action
- Bio-gas plant in Amman

4. Can you provide a general critique of the Iraqi Environmental groups you met? What did you like about them? Do you think they were working effectively? In what areas do they need to improve?

- I'd like to praise their motivation for their environmental work, on the other hand, I believe they need to enrich their openness to the field of environmental issues ... respectfully, recycling/reuse etc. They need a foundation to improve themselves. Thank you for everything.
- Most of them have the interest and energy to move forward. They need more environmental capacity building, funds and support
- Iraqi NGO's require serious capacity building in terms of organizational strengthening (NGO Management) from all aspects.
- Not all of them give proper attention since some left to answer their mobiles

5. Other Comments?

- In future efforts it will be useful if government representatives and private sector share their experiences and lessons learnt to encourage private-public-NGO's partnerships.
- Recommendations and needs generated from this conference should be taken to a further step with UNOPS
- The facilitator was professional. The roundtable needed more participants from Jordan, Syria & Lebanon. The Iraqi participants need to have more time in the coordination of their NGO's activities.
- There is a big need for training of Iraqi NGO's on Strategic planning and management skills such as resource management, presentation skills, etc.
- Build up capacity on EIA's and Environmental Management
- I suggest to focus on the new blood (youth), since I believe this work depends on voluntary work, and I have noticed that the young groups in Iraq are less than those made up of older people.